Thinking Through The Bible

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Pacific School of
Religion
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J D McCormick.

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Portland, Oregon

Thinking Through The Bible

or

A Guide to the Study of the Bible

By

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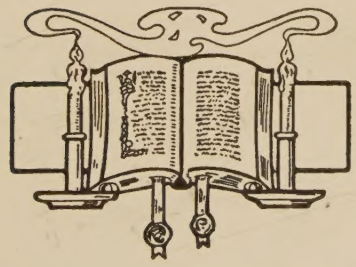

"What is written? How readest thou?"
"What thinkest thou? How think ye?"
—JESUS.

"Think on these things."
—PAUL.

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THE STUDENT AND HIS BIBLE

"Seek and ye shall find"

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS

ANDREW JAMES MCCORMICK

ALICE WOODARD MCCORMICK

JULIA ROCKWOOD MCCORMICK

and to my wife

IDA PEARL MCCORMICK

Who gave their children physical, mental, social and religious nourishment and encouragement and a hopeful outlook on life
This Book is Affectionately Dedicated

Introduction

AT LEAST a thousand books appear annually in the United States dealing with religious subjects. Practically all of them have their inspiration in Christianity and in the Bible which constitutes the record of the revelation which it holds dear. Most of these books, however, are about the Bible. The usual commentary and the average Sunday School lesson paper are of doubtful value to the student because they present conclusions ready made and dull the edge of original thought. Hence many people who ought to know the Bible are almost wholly ignorant of what it really says and means. The number of books which throw the student back upon himself and make him appreciate the inner significance of Bible truth is altogether too small. To this number Professor McCormick has made a worthy addition. As professor in a theological seminary and a teacher of Bible to college students he has obtained by practical experience a knowledge of the needs both of the more advanced and of the younger students of the Bible. In **Thinking Through the Bible,** he has sought to inspire actual study of the sacred book and reflection upon the results. Anyone who answers the inquiries propounded may be expected to obtain a well-balanced and well-rounded view of the Bible. Both the questions for study and the topics for discussion which are to be found at the close of each inquiry have been carefully chosen, and should result in increasing an understanding of the Bible and developing a love for it. It is greatly to be desired that this lucid expression of scholarship should not be confined to the class rooms where the author teaches, but should find its way also to use in adult Bible classes and Epworth League Chapters.

EDWARD LAIRD MILLS,
Editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate,
Portland, Oregon.

Suggestions for the Use of this Book

This book is the outgrowth of several years of teaching college freshmen. The purpose of the course has been to give the student an intelligent approach to the message of the Bible as a whole. The purpose always has been to focus attention upon the Bible. **Thinking Through the Bible** has been written to carry forward this purpose with college freshmen and other groups who for the first time are attempting to see the Bible as a whole.

It is offered to high school and college teachers, to directors of religious education, pastors, teachers of Bible classes and leaders of discussion groups as a guide book to the study of the Bible. The questions for study require extensive Bible reading and should be given careful consideration before the group discussion of the suggested topics. The classified bibliography at the close of the book has been carefully selected with a view of helping students to find books which should be in college and public libraries. At least one of these books in each section should be read and others consulted on special subjects.

Leaders of Bible discussion groups in Epworth League Institutes, Christian Endeavor, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. conferences will find the book adapted to their uses even though they may not have time to cover all of the material in a single season. It is hoped that the use of this book by individuals in private reading of the Bible will help them to a more clear understanding of its religious, ethical and social messages.

J. D. McCORMICK.

Salem, Oregon
Summer 1928

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PART I

FIRST INQUIRY

ARE YOU A THOUGHTFUL READER?

Inquiry leads one into promising fields of truth. Every thoughtful reader well knows that the most of his knowledge is won by investigation. Inquiry and investigation may sometimes indicate doubt, but they have no such mission here. This is an adventure into the realm of truth. The reader is asked to exercise an alert mind in the use of this guide-book as an aid to thinking through the Bible. This book will fail in its purpose if it does not challenge people to think while they are reading the Bible. The Bible was prepared by thoughtful minds for thinking people. It responds positively to the deepest inquiry and satisfies richly the most profound research. The message of the Bible does not fade with exposure to the elements of daily life. It stands the light of day.

The Open Bible.—A neighbor of my childhood had a parlor with a good rag carpet, factory furniture, and some portraits on the wall. But instead of the room being open for the comfort and inspiration of family

and friends it was usually closed and dark, with furniture and pictures covered. The treasures were preserved but not used. There is some ground for fear that the Bible too often is treated in this way. Parlor and Bible, both open for use, was the rule at home. Both were well kept and a certain reverence was felt by the children who were made acquainted with their spiritual as well as their physical ancestors. Thinking through the Bible was encouraged. Reverent inquiry leads to the light.

The Bible in the Light.—You are invited into God's great front room where there is light, warmth, comfort and inspiration for any who will partake of his hospitality. You are urged not to hurry your visit nor to become drowsy in the home of so gracious a host.

The Book of the Fireside.—The Bible has been the greatest book of the fireside. American homes have everything to gain and nothing to lose by establishing and maintaining systematic Bible study. An increasing number of educational leaders are encouraging among their students a thoughtful study of the great ethical, social and religious messages of the Bible. Courses in Bible history and literature are offered by colleges and universities. Opportunities for knowing the Bible were never more numerous and inviting than they are today. Will you join this earnest, thoughtful company in thinking through the Bible?

Importance of the Bible.—The Bible stands first among important books which have received the studious attention of scholars. Here is a book of incomparable historical, literary and religious significance. Just

what and how much the Bible means to the reader depends upon his age, training, interest and purpose. Doubtless most people read the Bible for its devotional inspiration and guidance. Such persons often confine their Bible reading to favorite passages, and, while helped by what they read, they may miss the wide sweep of truth revealed in the Bible.

How the Bible is Read.—Some read the Bible through as they would any other book. Of course, much help and information are gained by this practice. However, such reading, due to the arrangement of the Biblical material, is liable to result in a confused mind. Such confusion can be avoided by the application of certain simple but important principles which when habitually and diligently applied graduate the reader into a student of the Bible.

A Student's Questions.—A student of the Bible is one who is willing to bring his mind clearly and devotedly to an intelligent understanding of the Bible. He seeks to know what is recorded; why it was written; what truth it reveals; the reasonableness and importance of its teachings. He inquires into the teachings which apply today. Some of the questions he asks himself are: Is the Bible a challenge to the average student today? Does he readily apply himself to Bible study? Does the person of literary mind approach the Bible with the expectation with which he opens other books? Can and should the Bible mean more to him? How can it be made more attractive? Does the scientific mind explore the Bible with as great a desire to find truth as in other realms of in-

vestigation? Does the student of artistic temperament find interest and refreshment here? Has he noticed that the greatest music was inspired by Bible characters and stories? Does he observe that the world's great pictures have their source in the Bible?

The Influence of the Bible.—Has the attention of students in schools and colleges been arrested by a consideration of what influences brought into being the institutions which they attend? In most instances investigation will reveal the fact that men and women inspired by the great human and divine messages of the Bible resolved and sacrificed to provide better educational advantages for the youth of their own and succeeding generations. Many pioneer homes had but one book—the Bible. It was both an inspiration and guide. Its teachings were believed and trusted and its advices and admonitions heeded. There are homes in which this is the case today. Individuals, now as in former times, read their Bibles to discover the right way of life and follow its precepts as safe and dependable guides. The Bible is recognized as the greatest and most helpful book in the world.

The Bible Inspired.—Many books are said to be inspired, but we recognize the Bible as being God inspired, that is, God spoke to and through the several writers whose messages constitute the Bible. It deals with simple, human interests and with sublime, eternal truths. Great religious teachings are combined with practical, ethical and social messages. The Ten Commandments given through Moses and the Beatitudes pronounced by Jesus have influenced life for centuries

and are no less vital today. The earlier part of the Bible looks forward to the One whose life, teachings, death, resurrection and commission are recorded in the latter part.

The Bible Widely Distributed.—No other book is so well known and so much appreciated as the Bible. It is offered to readers today in eight hundred languages and dialects. Its messages apply equally well among all races of men. People in all occupations and social relations find that the ethical, social and religious teachings of the Bible apply helpfully and authoritatively to their lives.

Authority of the Bible.—The Bible makes no claim to authority in the realm of science, but has a message for the scientist. Political matters are not the chief concern in the Biblical record but there are principles enunciated which if heeded help the body politic. Indeed the Ten Commandments are held today to be axiomatic for law and order. Neither Jesus nor his disciples gave orders for the organization and doctrinal emphasis of the Christian church but the New Testament furnishes teachings essential to the permanence and growth of this most influential of social organizations. The realm of thought in which the Bible is an acknowledged authority is that of religion. It teaches the true relationship between man and God.

Purpose of This Book.—The object of this "Student's guide to the Bible" is threefold: First to arouse, through a careful study of this book, a studious interest in the Bible. Second, to guide willing students to an intelligent use of the great truths of the Bible.

Third, to help lovers of the Bible to a more clear understanding of its nature, purpose and contents.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What use is the reader asked to make of this guide-book?
2. What inquiries should a thoughtful student make concerning the Bible?
3. Why is a knowledge of the Bible important?
4. What distinctions should be made between ethical, social and religious teachings?
5. What is the threefold purpose of this guide-book?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) with the Beatitudes (Matthew 5).
2. Discuss the influence of the Bible.
3. With the aid of a map of the world indicate where the Bible is used.

SECOND INQUIRY

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

Names for the Bible.—As a student you are invited to approach the study of the Bible with the same interest and sense of wonder with which you undertake any other study. The Bible is a collection of writings, believed by those who make it the guide of their lives, to express the will of God to His people. It is often called "The Word of God", by which is meant the expression of God's truth. Many persons were engaged in putting into written form the several parts of this most wonderful library of religious literature. They believed the truthfulness of what they wrote, and recorded it that others of their own and later times might have the benefit.

The Bible is also referred to as "The Holy Scriptures". This expression was used in the days before the New Testament came into being and referred to the Old Testament, sometimes spoken of as "The Law and the Prophets". The old Hebrew Bible, of which our Old Testament is the true descendant, was divided into the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The latter term was used to cover the several books of the Old Testament not contained in the Law and the Prophets. Psalms, Proverbs, Job and several others

were included in this group. At the close of the first century of the Christian era when the writings which now compose our New Testament were collected, it must have been a very easy and natural thing to speak of all these inspired writings, both old and new, as the Holy Scriptures.

Student Appreciation of the Bible.—The student of history finds that the Bible occupies a very important place. It records not only facts but also important information concerning them. Sometimes this information is not found elsewhere. There is no claim in the Bible itself that it records all history for the period which it covers. Historical matter is used by the Biblical writers to convey the religious message which has been entrusted to them for record. No student of history can afford to leave out of consideration what the Bible has to offer in his field.

The Bible in Literature.—English literature, like that of many other languages, owes much to the Bible. Great writers such as Shakespeare and Milton were students of the Bible and made frequent use of Biblical quotations, illustrations and allusions. The recorded speeches of great English and American statesmen reveal the confidence which these leaders of thought had in the Bible. The Bible is great and good literature. Prose and poetry, narrative and sermon, prophecy and prayer, argument and song, all contribute to this great collection of God-inspired literature.

A Religious Message.—The Bible, as is well known and commonly accepted, is read and treasured chiefly because of its unique, inspiring and convincing relig-

ious message. It reveals to humanity, God's nature, truth and will. The Old Testament gives something of the story of man's search for God and of his successes and failures in trying to do God's will. It is interesting to follow the record of the human discovery of the nature of God. Men believed themselves called by God to perform certain tasks. The prophet and the kings considered that they stood, spoke and ruled in place of God. The growing appreciation of the qualities of God which make Him precious to the modern Christian may be found in the varied experiences of the Hebrew people as recorded in the Old Testament.

The Basis of Christian Faith.—The New Testament is more precious to Christians than is the Old Testament, because here is recorded the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, for whom our religion is named. There are also records of the beliefs and activities of those whom he called his disciples, that is followers, and who, after his ascension, went forth in obedience to his command as apostles, heralds and messengers. The experiences of these early followers and teachers form a most interesting record and offer inspiring and challenging reading. Even though the Christian may have learned from some other book what he knows about his faith, the New Testament is the inspiration and source of it.

Why Should One Study the Bible?—This is not an idle nor a foolish question. There are many books to be read and some are to be studied. There is a wealth of good books, many more than anyone has time to

read; new books which deal with modern conditions and interests. Why then read or study such an old book as the Bible? The question is partly answered in the foregoing paragraphs. If one would truly understand history and appreciate literature he must know the Bible. The same is true of religion. There are many religious beliefs and organizations. Some people are confused by them. Others seek to understand them, or at least the particular expression of religion which they call their own. Study is an honest endeavor to know things as they are. The student attempts to get to the bottom of things. He searches the sources of expression. He tries experiments in and out of the laboratory, not merely to see whether or not the thing of which he has heard or read is true, but that he may experience for his own life the truths that have come to others, and if possible to push the pathway of knowledge a little farther past the badlands of ignorance. Is not the Bible worthy of the same attention and effort? Does it not offer as rich returns as any field of study? Where else can one find truth so vitally related to human needs as in the Biblical accounts of God's dealings with His people? Where shall one look for the highest ethical and social ideals, the clearest expressions of human duties, the greatest promise of human destiny, the most inspiring spiritual realities, if not in the Bible?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What different names have been applied to the Bible?
2. What kinds of literature are found in the Bible?
3. What do we mean by the religious message of the Bible?
4. Why is the New Testament more precious to Christians than the Old Testament?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Name all the reasons that you can why one should study the Bible.
2. Compare the Old and New Testaments in number of books, variety of literature and periods of time covered.

THIRD INQUIRY

HOW DID THE BIBLE COME INTO BEING?

Origin of the Bible.—The Bible came into being as a record of human experiences. This record concerns a certain group of people. First a family is named. Then a chosen family, which later grows into a great community of slaves and still later into a nation, occupies the stage of action. This nation under the leadership of judges, prophets and kings has various experiences. Finally this nation loses its home, its place of worship and its identity. The Old Testament is a record of these various experiences and of their religious significance.

Arrangement of Record.—The books of the Old Testament have been arranged according to their subject matter and not in the order in which they were written. However, the account of creation properly comes at the beginning of the record. The development of the human family very naturally follows. The various experiences of the people individually, politically and religiously provide material for a record of God's dealings with His people. These records, made at different times by different people and under varying circumstances, indicating their failures as well as

their victories, their hymns of praise and their complaints, form a story of intense human interest.

Order and Manner of Production.—No one knows just what parts of the Old Testament were the first to be recorded. Many consider the writings of the prophets older than the narrative portions. But for our present consideration the manner of the writing, and how and why it was preserved, are more important questions. The early Hebrew writings were doubtless on papyrus although none of these is extant in the original manuscript. Copies were made from time to time, and of course the number of manuscripts was growing constantly. Some of the oldest books of the Old Testament may have been written as early as 1200 B. C. and the more recent ones as late as 165 B. C.

The Canon of Scripture.—The word "canon" actually means a reed or cane, a piece of which was used for measuring, as a yard stick is used today. Thus the term came to be used as a standard of measurement. The word canon was applied to sacred writings such as the decalogue and the books of the Law. Later the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve (minor prophets) were called the second canon. To these were later added the remaining books of the Old Testament. The canon of the Old Testament in Hebrew took form as early as 132 B. C. Writings were included in the canon of Scripture as godly men became convinced of their divine origin and purpose.

The books of the New Testament were adjudged to be canonical as it was demonstrated that they were of

apostolic origin. Most if not all of the books of the New Testament were written during the first century but the New Testament canon was not settled until the fourth century of the Christian era.

Materials Used.—Papyrus was made from the pulp of a large reed which grew on the deltas of the Nile. The reed, which varied in diameter from two to six inches, was split in halves, and then with a thin sharp knife very thin layers of pulp were cut. These were laid side by side, or edge to edge, on a smooth surface and other layers were laid across the first ones. All were held together by paste. This mat was then soaked with water and pounded and pressed into a thin sheet of material something like paper. When it had been dried in the sun, it was smoothed by rubbing with powdered stone, and was cut into sheets suitable for use. Ink was applied with a pointed brush made of stiff hair. The sheets were fastened together, end to end, and the finished writing rolled up for convenience of handling and for preservation. Later the skins of sheep and lambs were tanned and polished so that they would take ink. This parchment was found to be tougher than papyrus and was therefore favored by those writing or copying the precious information which was to become the Old Testament. These records were made in Hebrew while those of the New Testament were in Greek.

What is Meant by the Inspiration of the Bible?—It is a way of expressing the Christian belief that God inspired the writers to record their knowledge and experiences. There has been much discussion, into

which we cannot enter, as to just what constitutes inspiration. Some hold that God dictated the words, and that the writer was merely a mechanical instrument. Others believe that it was the soul, mind and life of the writers which were inspired. The book of Hebrews opens with the words, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." A careful study of the Biblical writings and an observation of how God speaks through the Holy Spirit to devoted souls today seem to support the contention that inspiration is a matter of spirit, mind, soul and life rather than of words. Of course the words or expressions of such lives are commonly accepted as inspired words. This is not out of harmony with Paul's thought in his second letter to Timothy, 3:16, in which he says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Translations.—Following the tasks of recording and copying the books which make up our Bible, is that of translation. The first translation, about 200 B. C., was that of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. As the work was done by seventy scholars, the term Septuagint has been applied. It is also indicated by LXX. A very important step toward our English Bible was the translation of the entire Bible into Latin, 390-405 A. D. At the request of the Bishop of Rome this great work, called the Latin Vulgate, was done by a very able scholar, Jerome, who for several years conducted a monastery in Palestine. Many before Jerome had made translations into Latin

of parts or even all of the Bible, but the results of their labors varied greatly. The Roman Bishop desired to have a translation which he could approve, and which he hoped would supersede all others. Jerome's first work on the Old Testament was a revision of the earlier Latin translations by comparing them with the Septuagint, but later he made a new and independent translation from the Hebrew, including many changes for which he was severely criticised. Finally St. Augustine and others began to see the superiority of the new translation, and under their leadership it won its way to general recognition. This was only the beginning of very pronounced reactions against new translations. Later in our study we shall see that those who translated the Bible into English offered the product of their labors at the risk of their lives.

The English Bible.—The next step toward the English Bible was the Anglo-Saxon paraphrasing of certain Psalms, and of the narrative portions of the Old Testament. There is evidence that the Venerable Bede translated the Gospel of John, but no part of it is known to be preserved. In Paris is a version of Psalms 1-50 assigned to Alfred the Great, and is considered by scholars to belong to the latter part of the eighth century. The earliest work on the Gospels of which there is record is a paraphrase, once the property of Christ Church, Canterbury, and preserved in the British Museum. The lack of greater progress in the translation of the Bible into English may be accounted for partly by the fact that the Latin was still used in the church

services, and that French was the language used for literary purposes during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The Father of the English Bible was John Wyclif, 1320-1384.—His desire to help the common people led him to establish the work of Poor Priests who preached to the people, and to translate the Bible into English. The New Testament was completed in 1380 and the Old Testament two years later. These books were hand copied, of course, as printing did not come until later. A number of these books are still preserved—one of them in the British Museum.

The First New Testament Printed in English was a translation from the Greek by William Tyndale, a well prepared scholar of both Oxford and Cambridge. Because of the enmity of the Bishop of London, Tyndale was forced to flee to Germany, where in 1525 or 1526 he succeeded in having printed his new translation of the New Testament. The printing was done at Cologne and at Worms. Eight sheets of this first edition, printed at Cologne, are on exhibition at the British Museum. A copy of the edition printed at Worms is shown at the British Museum but belongs to the Baptist College at Bristol. In January, 1530, a translation of the Pentateuch was issued by Tyndale. Miles Coverdale, who had been an assistant of Tyndale's, had printed in 1535 the first complete printed English Bible. This was Tyndale's translation of the New Testament and Pentateuch completed by translations from German and Latin Bibles. Tyndale was

strangled and burned as a heretic at Vilvorde on October 6, 1536.

Cranmer's Bible.—The first English Bible to receive the King's sanction was recommended by Archbishop Cranmer and was known as Matthew's Bible, 1537. John Rogers, a close associate of Tyndale, is thought to have been the person actually responsible for this edition. In 1539 the Great Bible, authorized to be used in churches, was published and widely distributed. There were seven editions of the Great Bible, and orders were given that they should be used in the churches.

Geneva Bible.—The first popular English Bible was translated and printed at Geneva. William Whittingham, the translator and editor, was Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. His first New Testament was dated 1557. It was of convenient size for private use, was printed in Roman type and divided into numbered verses. An edition of the entire Bible was published in 1560. These Bibles were sold at a price which made possible their possession by the common people. They were especially popular with the Puritans.

The Bishops' Bible, 1568, was the work of a number of bishops and others, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker. Copies of this Bible were to be found in every cathedral and in the homes of archbishops and bishops, and in many churches. This was the official Bible of the churches until the appearance of the authorized version of 1611.

The Douay Bible is the name given to a translation fostered by the Roman Catholic Church. It was trans-

lated from the Latin Vulgate. The New Testament was printed at Rheims in 1582, and the Old Testament at Douay in 1609.

The King James or Authorized Version was a revision of the Bishops' Bible, and was printed in 1611. Many able scholars were engaged in this important task. They made use of all available material, both in manuscript and earlier versions. They labored diligently to give a true translation in the finest English. For three hundred years this version of the English Bible has influenced literature as well as religion, and today is looked upon as the most majestic of English literature. This version has gone through many editions and has undergone many editorial changes in form of letters, punctuation, use of words and spelling. The modern reader finds it rather difficult to read the first edition which was printed in "black letter", an old English type.

The Revised Version of 1881-1885 is the product of English and American scholars whose objects were: to take account of the change in the meanings of words during nearly three centuries; to arrange the Bible record into paragraphs according to the thought presented; to arrange the poetry of the Bible so that it would be readily recognized as such; and to make use of such original sources as had become available since the printing of the King James Bible. The Revised Version had a large sale and was appreciated by scholars and preachers, but not so generally beloved as the Authorized Version.

The American Standard Revised Version, 1901-1904, is an American product, both in scholarship and printing. The text is that agreed upon by American scholars who worked on the Revised Version of 1881-1885. The selection of words and phrases conforms to American understanding and use of Englsh.

Modern Translations.—Several translations of the New Testament and a few of the Old Testament have been offered recently by individual scholars. These are often helpful in gaining the fullest meaning of a passage and doubtless encourage Bible reading. The Authorized Version is still preferred by many because of its beautiful language and extensive influence. The use, by comparison, of several translations should result in a better understanding and fuller appreciation of God's message to mankind, as found in the Bible.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the origin of the Bible?
2. What materials were used in making the early records?
3. What is meant by the inspiration of the Bible?
4. How did the Latin Vulgate come into being?
5. Trace the main steps which led to the King James version of 1611.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

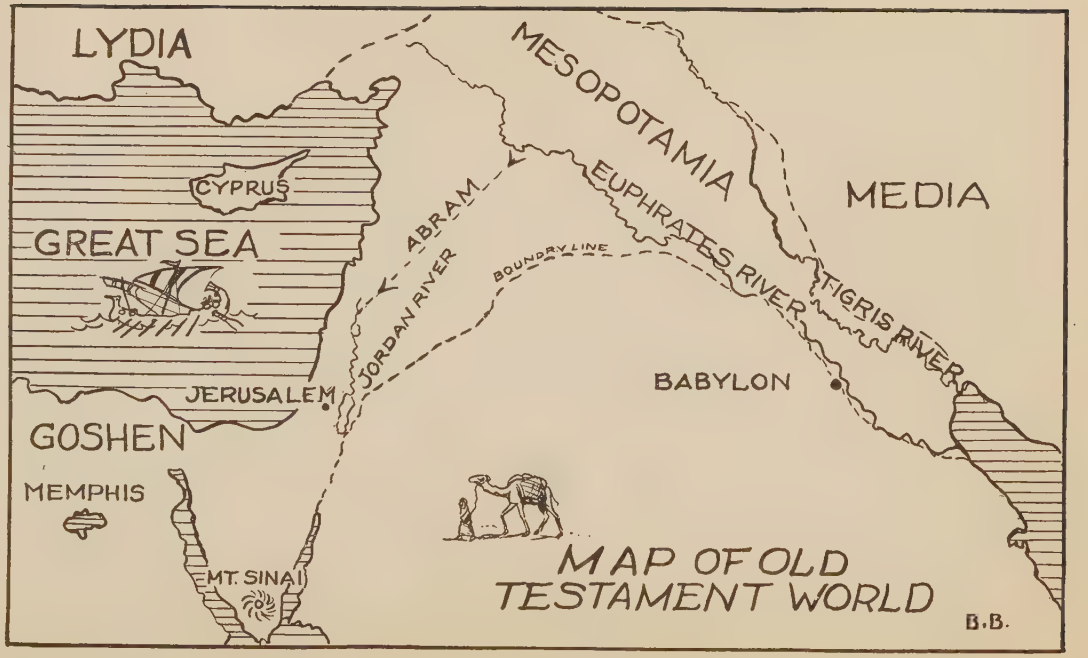
1. Discuss the order and manner of production of the books of the Bible.
2. Read encyclopedia articles on Wyclif, Tyndale and the Geneva Bible.
3. Compare as many modern translations as you can secure, and discuss the merits of each.

FOURTH INQUIRY

WHAT ARE THE LANDS AND WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE?

There are short passages in the Bible which may be read for devotional inspiration without particular consideration of their relation to the rest of the Bible. The twenty-third Psalm and others of the Psalms, as well as the well known and much beloved thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John, and many others, may be very profitably read in this way.

Approaches.—If one sets out to study and understand the Bible he must look at it as a whole. He must study every part in its relationship to the entire Bible. The way of arriving at such an understanding is called an approach. The term is not unfamiliar nor confusing. All are acquainted with approaches to bridges, cities, play grounds or important civic centers. The Bible presents, in many instances, change of scene, object of record and effect of revelation. Not all events here recorded took place in the same location. The speakers, actors, listeners, leaders, followers and recorders are presented in great variety. The order of record is not always chronological. Therefore attention is given to approaches. Four are offered for


LYDIA
MESOPOTAMIA
MEDIA
CYPRUS
GREAT SEA
ABRAM
EUPHRATES RIVER
TIGRIS RIVER
BOUNDARY LINE
JORDAN RIVER
JERUSALEM
BABYLON
GOSHEN
MEMPHIS
MT. SINAI
MAP OF OLD TESTAMENT WORLD
B.B.

consideration: geographical, historical, literary and religious.

The geographical approach raises the question, "Where did these events take place?" The lands referred to in the Bible are closely related to the southern, eastern and northern shores of the Mediterranean or Great Sea. In the earliest part of the Old Testament we are introduced to the twin valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, across the desert to the east of the Great Sea. Next a strip of land close to the east end of the Great Sea is brought to our attention. It is called Canaan in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is referred to as three sections: Judea on the south, including Jerusalem; Samaria, to the north of Judea; and Galilee, north of Samaria. Here is a land about one hundred and fifty miles in length. Its width varies from about sixty-five miles in the north, to more than one hundred in the south. North of this land is Syria, and to the south is the Sinaitic peninsula. To the southwest is Egypt, which plays an important part in both Old and New Testament life. The land along the north coast of the Great Sea receives our attention in the study of the New Testament, and includes Asia Minor, Greece, Macedonia, Italy and several islands near these countries.

Canaan, of the Old Testament, is called **Palestine** in our day. Approaching it from the Mediterranean Sea, we observe a lowland to the south which is called the Philistine Plain. North of this is the Plain of Sharon. A ridge running northwest and ending in Mt. Carmel makes a barrier between the Plain of

Sharon and that of Esdraelon. These three plains form the most level and fertile parts of all the land. A pair of mountain ranges attract our attention to the north. The Lebanon range is highest and nearest to the sea. The road leading up over it reaches an elevation of 5,750 feet, and the mountains along the way are as high as 7,500 feet. Big Lebanon, at the north end of the range, near the ancient town of Baalbek, is 10,500 feet high, and has snow on its crest the year round. A broad valley lies between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, which in the Old Testament is referred to as the valley of Baca. The eastern range is not so high as the western, and terminates in Mt. Hermon—a snow-capped mount at the northern boundary of Galilee. The Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges and the valley between are in Syria and therefore are not a part of Palestine, but they have a place in Old Testament history and are properly included in this description.

Mountains, Plains and Products.—Running from north to south through the land is a ridge of hills and mountains, attaining a height around Jerusalem of 2,500 feet. There is one very attractive break in this range made by the valley or plain of Jezreel, a short distance south of Nazareth. The body of these hills is of a soft limestone with a very thin covering of soil. In places terraces have been built to retain the soil and moisture so that crops can be grown. Olive trees cover the more fertile sections of the country. Grapes are raised in abundance around Hebron, south of Jerusalem. Figs and almonds, and near Jaffa, oranges

are among the attractive products of Palestine today. A careful reader of the Bible will observe that many more kinds of fruits were common in the land which was described as flowing with milk and honey. Wheat, barley and corn were among the important grain crops and many seeds such as sesame, mustard and pepper were raised. All of these crops are to be found in Palestine today, and the cultivation of the soil, the manner of sowing and reaping, threshing, marketing and milling have changed but little during the centuries.

Building Materials.—Although there is an abundance of stone for all purposes, there is a poverty of mineral and timber supply. Houses are poorly built of rough rock and mud, with an occasional one of well trimmed and carefully laid stone. Churches, synagogues and mosques have been built in the more substantial manner. The majority of the buildings are easy prey of devastating earthquakes.

Homes.—As in the olden days, many herdsmen rove through the valleys and over the hills with small flocks of goats and sheep and with large families, providing for themselves the very slight protection of crude tents, wind-breaks and shade mats. These crude devices are woven from goat's hair and other coarse materials. In the villages and towns the small stone houses described above are workshop and factory as well as home.

The Jordan.—Possibly the best known river of the Christian world is the Jordan. It rises in the foothills of Mt. Hermon, runs a few miles south where it spreads

out into a pond called Lake Huleh or the Waters of Merom. The surface of the water at this point of the river's course is at sea level. Only twelve miles south the Jordan widens into the Sea of Galilee and has dropped to 682 feet below sea level. This body of blue water, also called Tiberius, is twelve and a half miles long and eight miles wide. Somewhat steep and rugged mountains rise from the eastern shore, the town of Tiberius is built on a hillside along the southwest shore, and a gentle slope to the northwest reaches back into plains. Leaving the Sea of Galilee the Jordan enters upon a very crooked journey to the Dead Sea. An airplane covers the distance of sixty-five miles in a half hour but the river winds its way for two hundred miles. The volume of water is doubled by tributaries from both east and west. The muddy water enters the Dead Sea 1292 feet below sea level. Although the Jordan overflows its banks during the rainy season the lower part of the valley is barren of crops. Trees and bushes grow along the edge of the stream, making a home for wild animals, but offering little comfort or profit to man.

The Dead Sea is the lowest body of water in the world. Millions of tons of water and sediment from the Jordan and the rivers of the mountains east and west of the Dead Sea are poured into it daily. The only outlet is by evaporation. The water looks clear but is not only salty but is so heavy with mineral and soil that four pailfuls evaporated leaves one pailful of sediment. Estimates have been made that more than six million tons of water rise in vapor daily from this

body of water a little less than fifty miles in length by about ten miles in width. The hills of Moab rise abruptly on the eastern shore to a height of two or three thousand feet. The Judean hills on the west are nearly as high, but are farther back from the water and less precipitous.

Roads and Travel.—There are good roads in Palestine now and one may go by automobile to all the main points of interest. The inhabitants still use donkeys and camels as beasts of burden. Bundles of cloth, rugs and food supplies; furniture, building materials and water; tents, bedding and passengers; all these and many others constitute the burdens of these faithful servants of mankind. Travel in Palestine since the World War is much more safe, comfortable and rapid than during the dominance of the Turk. Hotels with comfortable accommodations are available at the more important cities and towns. For beauty of landscape one should visit Palestine in spring. The summer months are very hot, the fields parched and hillsides bare. There is the advantage for the summer visitor of seeing the crops, the threshing floors in use, and partaking of the ripe fruits. A number of side roads which are fairly good during the summer are impassable earlier in the year. Observations of the ways in which the inhabitants dress, live and work as well as the crops, flocks and herds which they raise, gives the visitor a conception of conditions as they were in Bible times.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What four approaches should be kept in mind in studying the Bible?
2. Compare the area of Palestine with that of your state.
3. What are the main products of Palestine?
4. Describe the valley of the Jordan including the seas.
5. What is the difference between the level of the Dead Sea and the altitude of Jerusalem?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. With the use of a map indicate the Old and New Testament worlds.
2. Discuss the homes and occupations of the people of Palestine.
3. Find in the Bible three descriptions of Palestinian life.

FIFTH INQUIRY

WHAT OTHER APPROACHES LEAD TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE?

The preceding chapter has offered a view of the land which takes so prominent a place in the events recorded in the Bible. A knowledge of the geography and topography provides a foundation for a study of the people who have lived there. We now take up the consideration of the second approach to an understanding of the Bible.

The Historical Approach guides the student in seeking answers for such questions as, "What happened? Of what significance was it or is it? What followed? Is the account given more than once and is it reliable? What people were concerned? How did they react to their experiences? Has anything of consequence been recorded here which is not found elsewhere? How long a period of time is represented by these records? What relation has all of this to what I am learning in other departments of study?"

The Chosen People.—These are but a few of the many questions which very properly arise in the mind of the thoughtful student. They will be answered, at least in part, as we go forward with the study of the Bible. The Old Testament presents the oldest account

which we have of the creation of the universe and the beginning of the human family. While the accounts in the first and second chapters of Genesis may seem to be in detail they are in reality highly condensed statements of a very great story. The student of the Bible must realize this. He cannot read far into the Genesis record without becoming conscious of the fact that not nearly all that occurred has been told. He observes that he is following but one branch of the human family. References are made to people of whose origin or relationship he is ignorant. This leads to the conclusion that there was some purpose in recording the events in the lives of some while merely referring to others. Following that suggestion the student finds that this family grows into a tribe, suffers a period of severe bondage, is led forth from bondage to freedom and conquest. The recognition of God is discovered. The account indicates that the purpose of the narrative is to reveal God's dealings with a certain group of people which he refers to as his own chosen people. How these people sin and repent, worship and sacrifice, prosper and fall! Prophets appeal to them. Kings despoil them. False prophets mislead them and greedy or jealous neighbors devastate their crops and their families. A remnant abides in expectation of the coming of a deliverer Messiah, whom they foretell.

The Messiah.—The New Testament records the events connected with the coming of the Messiah, his life and ministry. A group of believers, descendants of the chosen family of the Old Testament, carry on

the message established by the Messiah. By the end of the first century of the Christian era the followers of Jesus Christ the Messiah have reached outside the Hebrew or Jewish race and beyond the bounds of Canaan of the Old Testament and Palestine of the New Testament. No one knows how many centuries are covered by this story thus briefly reviewed. But years are not the most important matters in history. Lives and lessons are what count. Both of these are here in a trustworthy and challenging record. The student with the historical sense will find them.

The Literary Approach entertains questions concerning the kinds of literature found in the Bible. The student will be rewarded who sets out on an investigation. With narrative he will find poetry, prayers, commandments and songs. Sermons, debates, dramas and proverbs will be the result of his search. He will find history reflected in Psalms and religious experiences in politics. A remarkable company of actors make this literature possible.

Dates of Composition.—The literary approach seeks to find the source of this literature. How did these books come into existence and when and by whom were they written? How are they related to one another and to contemporaneous writings? Careful study has warranted the conclusion that the books of the Old Testament were written between 1200 B. C. and 165 B. C. It is not likely that any of the books of the New Testament took permanent form earlier than 50 A. D. The last of them was probably written by the close of the same century. Consideration of the Bibli-

cal authors and the contents of their writings will be given as the different books of the Bible are studied. Attention to the literary approach will bring rich reward.

The Religious Approach is the most common and some may have supposed it to be the only approach to a study of the Bible. The more carefully the geopraphical, historical and literary approaches are observed the more safe and certain will be the religious findings. Bishop McIntyre used to say to his young ministers, "He who would hitch his wagon to a star must have more than an ordinary wheelbarrow for a vehicle." So if the student would have a great religious purpose and ambition in his study of the Bible, he must furnish his mind well with instruments of investigation. A clear thinking mind, an eagerness to learn, patience to search and consider, appreciation of truth in whatever form it may be dressed, a soul-response to lessons offered, and a readiness to receive the spiritual content of this great storehouse of religious instruction—all these and more are necessary. He may profitably consider the admonition of the apostle Paul to his young brother minister, "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15.

Summary of Part I.—You have been urged to engage in the study of the Bible with your mind alert, thinking as you go. A general view of the contents of the Bible has been given. A knowledge of the toil and sacrifices which made the Bible possible in any lan-

guage and which made it available in English should increase the student's appreciation of the Bible as great literature. Even a slight acquaintance with the Biblical lands and people helps to an understanding of the Bible. You are urged to keep in mind and to use the approaches in your effort to think through the Bible. The religious approach is the most important but a truly sincere student will not neglect the geographical, historical and literary approaches. Whether one studies topics, characters or books of the Bible, he should test his findings by these approaches. Finally, the student should realize that all of these books together form a unit. One message is presented —a revelation of God's good will for all who will accept it.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Illustrate what is meant by the historical approach.
2. What interests are considered in the literary approach?
3. Between what years of the world's history were the books of the Bible written?
4. What is the object of, and what should be included in the religious approach?
5. What was Paul's admonition to Timothy?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the four approaches and illustrate their uses.
2. Summarize the material of these five chapters.

PART II

THE OLD TESTAMENT

SIXTH INQUIRY

WHAT ARE THE EARLIEST RECORDS?

The Hebrew Bible.—The Bible of Jesus' day was in three parts. The oldest and most authoritative part was called the Law and was composed of the earliest books of the Old Testament. These books of the Law, which contain much history, were recognized by the Hebrew people as Holy Scripture about 400 B. C. The books of the Prophets, while considered not so authoritative, were held to be inspired and were recognized as Holy Scripture about 200 years B. C. The latest books of the Old Testament, recognized as Scripture about 175 B. C., are called the Writings. The Psalms and Proverbs are the most important part of this literature. A thoughtful reading of the Old Testament reveals a God of wisdom and power bringing a universe into being. We then see a comparatively small spot on one planet of that universe selected for the development of a family which is soon spoken of as a chosen people. There are evidences of other branches of the human race and of their development of a civilization and religion. But the historical purpose

of the Old Testament is to give the origin and trace the progress of the religion of a chosen group whom we come to know as the Hebrews.

The Hexateuch.—We shall now make a brief study of the first six books of the Old Testament which are often referred to as the Hexateuch. The first five of these books are called the Pentateuch or the books of Moses. Some have thought that Moses wrote these books but close study shows that this could hardly have been the case with all of them. But they are the books of Moses in the sense that he is the outstanding character and servant of God in leading, organizing and establishing the government and religion of these people whose life and faith are responsible for the historical and religious story of the Old Testament.

The Book of Genesis is very properly called the book of Beginnings. The name of God is the fourth word of the account, in the English translation, and he is credited with creating all things. Two short chapters composed of fifty-five sentences present a twofold account of the origin of life reaching its climax in the placing of a man and a woman in a garden and giving them dominion over all living things upon the earth. It is recorded of man that God breathed into his being the breath of life and man became a living soul. (Gen. 2:7.) This soul of man is the distinguishing feature of his being and while he needs a body for expression the soul is the object of divine consideration all through the Bible.

A natural subdivision of Genesis comes at the end of the eleventh chapter. The first part, in addition

to the creation stories, records the multiplication of people on the earth with the names of many families. There are stories of adventure, suggestions of moral ideals, the practices of sacrifice and prayer, the recognition of sin, and the story of a flood, which with the exception of one family, wiped out human life. The story of Noah, the hero of the flood, seems to be given to emphasize faith. There are parallel flood stories in the literatures of other peoples of that early time.

Abram the First Hebrew.—In Genesis 11:26 Abram, later called Abraham, is introduced. Accompanied by his family, flocks and herds, he journeyed westward out of the land of beginnings into Canaan. The fact that he was an emigrant and a pioneer seems to have given rise to the name of Hebrew, as his descendants were called. Chapters 12 to 50 give a brief account of Abraham's sons and their families, of a famine that forced them into Egypt, and of the outstanding character of that experience, Joseph.

The Value of the Genesis Record.—The first book of the Bible is commonly accepted as an authoritative account of the beginning of the universe and of all life. It answers many of the questions common to human thought such as, "Whence did we come? By what power? With whose authority? What are the relationships of life?" However, Genesis does not answer all of the questions. We accept the record of the Bible as true, but we know that many facts concerning life have been discovered since the Bible account was completed. For instance, scientific study has made electricity a remarkable servant of human-

ity whereas in Old Testament times its flash in the heavens was considered to be a sign of the wrath of God. Men have learned to read a record in the rocks, which is not out of harmony with, but is supplementary to, the creation account in Genesis. Reading the two together gives a better understanding of the universe and a higher conception of the greatness and goodness of God who is not only of the beginning but of all life and all ages. The marvelous stories that center about the patriarchs are among the greatest stories of all time. In them we find revealed men's thought about God in his providence. The experiences of sin, prayer and sacrifice present many strong ethical and religious lessons. The mistakes made by these outstanding characters, along with their excellencies, have an ethical importance which challenges consideration. Late books of the Bible record repeated emphasis of these primary object lessons in ethics and religion.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How many accounts of the creation are given, and which seems the most vivid? What similarities and differences are found?
2. Name four religious and social institutions noted in the first four chapters of Genesis.
3. For what purpose was the story of the tower of Babel recorded?
4. Who were the four leading characters in Genesis after the death of Noah? Give two outstanding traits of character of each.

5. What ethical standards are portrayed in Joseph's career?
6. What teachings do we obtain from the book of Genesis as a whole?

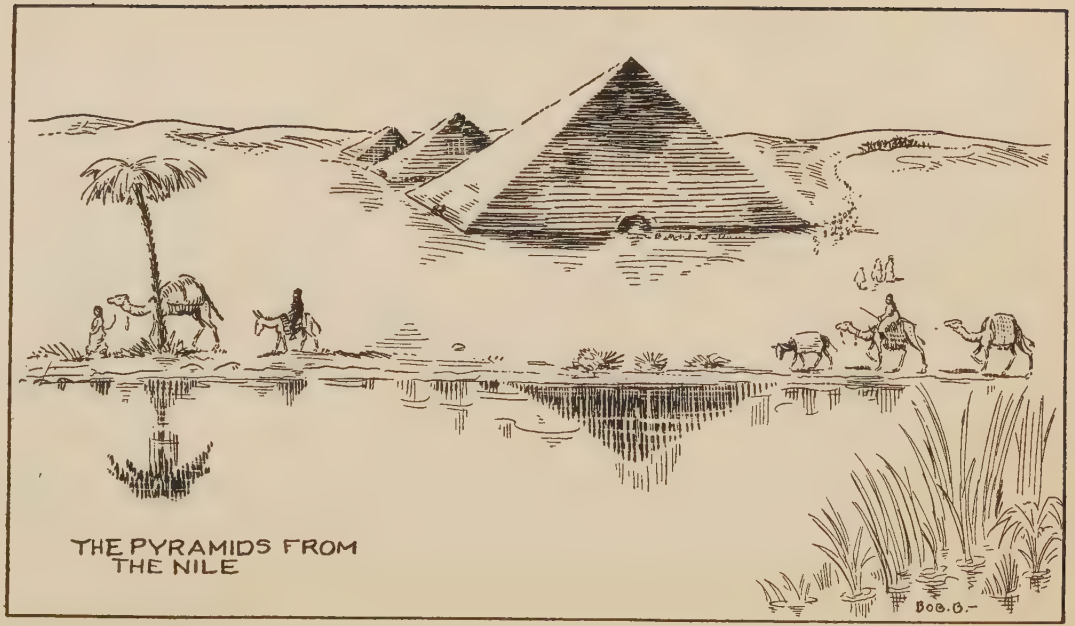
TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give a list of the social and religious customs mentioned in Genesis.
2. Compare the Biblical flood story with extra-Biblical accounts.
3. Locate and give the significance of Ur of the Chaldees.
4. Study the Babylonian and Egyptian background of early Hebrew history.

EXODUS

Slavery in Egypt.—Exodus is the record of a movement towards a selected nation. Egypt, which had been a refuge for a group of starving families, became a prison for their rapidly multiplying descendants. The grandsons of Jacob, called the children of Israel, were slaves to the Egyptian government. The record in Exodus shows that they were engaged in the construction of great buildings of which the pyramids, still standing, are imposing remnants.

Childhood of Moses.—The visitor to Cairo today is shown a piece of low land, densely covered with reeds, as the place where a little Hebrew boy was hidden by his mother. The story in Exodus says that a daughter of Pharaoh found this little boy and had him drawn out of his hiding place, gave him the name Moses (drawn out) and had him cared for by his own mother. Later, Pharaoh's daughter attended to Moses' training as if he were her own child and he was given a generous education.



THE PYRAMIDS FROM
THE NILE

The Call of Moses.—When Moses grew up he recognized his family ancestry. He espoused the cause of his countrymen who were slaves, and answered the call of God to lead them out of slavery to a land that God had provided for them. He undertook and faithfully held to his task under very trying and discouraging circumstances. These slaves were accustomed to orders, but not to leadership in the sense in which Moses was to be their leader.

The Plagues.—There were many demonstrations of God's power and presence before the people were ready to break away from their bondage in Egypt and before Pharaoh was willing to let them go. The plagues were object lessons to demonstrate the power and presence of God. Finally, when their children had been saved from death by Israel's obedience to God's orders given through Moses, and when the first born of the Egyptians had been slain, these people were given permission to leave.

Wandering.—The book of Exodus gives the story of a toilsome wandering in the Arabian desert east of Egypt and south of Canaan. Their sustenance in the wilderness was provided miraculously in the form of a small, round something which the people called "Manna". We have no record of any other name for this food than that first exclamation, "What is it?" The event of outstanding importance during the forty years of wandering occurred during the pause before rocky and rugged Mount Horeb, or Sinai. Here certain commandments were given concerning Israel's relationship to God. The epitome of the rules given

at that time is recorded in the Decalogue which means "ten words" which we have come to speak of as the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments are religious in teaching. The remainder have to do with conduct and are therefore ethical and social.

The Tabernacle.—A very elaborately ornamented tent, known as the tabernacle, protecting the ark of the covenant, was provided as the place of the presence of God, so that the wanderers might feel that they had their God with them. The history given in Exodus, of the wilderness wanderings, closes with an account of the glory of Jehovah which surrounded and filled the tabernacle.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why was this book named the Exodus?
2. For what purpose were the plagues sent to the Egyptians?
3. What was the origin and the significance of the Passover?
4. With what modern social conditions do the Ten Commandments deal?
5. Why did the people make a "golden calf"? What was the result?
6. What traits of character are to be noted in the leaders which God called?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the origin of the Sabbath.
2. Identify: Moses, Aaron, Jethro, Miriam and Joshua.
3. Trace the growth through Exodus of the Hebrew's conception of God.
4. Give standards of living and justice found in the book of Exodus.

LEVITICUS

A Priestly Book.—The third book of the Bible contains instructions for the consecration and duties of priests, for worship and sacrifices, laws for purification, religious festivals and the day of atonement, and for the care of the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant.

Some of the admonitions given in Leviticus fittingly apply to the time of Moses. Many directions for the priests regarding religious ceremonies reflect conditions during and following the Babylonian captivity, also called the exile, which occurred several centuries later. The development of the idea of holiness as separation from others also belongs to this later period. The consideration of these and other facts has led scholars to the conclusion that Leviticus took the form from which our translation was made between 400 B. C. and 300 B. C. The book therefore appears, in our Bible, as a parenthesis in the account of the experiences of Israel in the wilderness.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What religious characteristics do you discover in the laws of Leviticus?
2. How often and in what manner did the children of Israel make an atonement for their sins?
3. What chapters emphasize holiness?
4. Which chapter emphasizes just dealing?
5. What was the year of jubilee and how was it celebrated?

NUMBERS

The Census.—Accounts of one census taken before the people left Sinai and another before they entered Canaan is responsible for naming the fourth book of the Bible, Numbers. The thirty-eight years which elapsed between the first and last events recorded in Numbers are not fully represented. The record covers the history of not more than a few weeks. What experiences filled those years we are not told. Enough is given to show that the struggle for existence was rigorous. There were enemies to face and rebellions to suppress. The country through which they passed was rough and in many sections barren. Water, food and forage were scarce. Progress was slow and there were many bitter complaints. Moses was a very great leader with a truly formidable task.

Levites and Ceremonies.—Instructions were given exempting the Levites from participation in war and defining their duties as priests. They were to be active in the priesthood between the ages of twenty-five and fifty years. The Passover, commemorating the deliverance of their first born from death in Egypt, was to be solemnly observed each year. Seventy elders were appointed to assist Moses in his multitudinous duties.

Stories and Poems.—The incidents of the budding of Aaron's rod, the fiery serpents and the strange conversation between Balaam and the ass are attractive stories of this book. A number of poetic passages are found in Numbers.

Directions for the conquest of Canaan and its division among the tribes of Israel were given before the Jordan was crossed. The record closes with Moses in full vigor and command. He is the hero but hardly the author of the book. The attention given to priestly ceremonies indicates a post-exilic authorship.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Who had charge of the services of the tabernacle?
2. How did the people receive the report of the spies?
3. Why was Moses forbidden to enter the promised land?
4. What was the effect of Bălaam's prophecy upon the people?
5. What lessons were learned by the people during their wanderings in the wilderness?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the work of Aaron, Joshua and Caleb.
2. Locate the Promised Land.
3. Summarize the value of the book of Numbers.

DEUTERONOMY

Moses' Farewell.—The last of the books of Moses presents the hero speaking to the people as they were gathered on the east side of the Jordan previous to entering the Promised Land. Moses reviewed the history of their wandering and exhorted his people to keep the laws which had been given. Many laws were rehearsed relating to marriage, family, integrity, neighborly justice, the offering of tithes and the con-

sequence of disobedience. The most important group of laws repeated in Deuteronomy is the Decalogue in the fifth chapter. These Ten Commandments vary slightly in wording but are the same as recorded in Exodus 20. Moses warned against apostasy and idolatry, and promised blessings to the obedient. Israel was reminded of God's gracious and faithful care and was promised a great and true prophet, 18:15, 18.

Joshua Commissioned.—Moses commissioned Joshua, his faithful assistant, to complete the task of leading the people into Canaan and of establishing them there. "And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of good courage: for thou shalt go with this people into the land which Jehovah hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And Jehovah, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." 31:7, 8. Then follow the song and blessing of Moses.

The Death of Moses.—From the top of Pisgah, a peak of Mount Nebo which rises from the plain of Moab, opposite Jericho, Moses viewed the Land of Canaan. "And Jehovah said unto him, This is the land. . . . I have caused thee to see it . . . but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was one hundred and twenty years old

when he died: his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated. . . . And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face." 34:4-11.

Time of Writing.—Deuteronomy must have taken form early in the seventh century B. C. It is commonly considered that this was the book discovered in the Temple at Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah. In II Kings 22, 23, there is an account of the reforms, religious and social, under Josiah during the last quarter of the seventh century B. C. The finding and reading of this great summary of the experiences of Israel under the leadership of Moses, God's spokesman, undoubtedly gave impetus to this reform.

Whether the student's interest is history, literature, ethics or religion, he finds a rich field in Deuteronomy.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what ways does Deuteronomy resemble the book of Exodus?
2. What effect did the years of bondage in Egypt have upon the Hebrew people as revealed in Chapter 15?
3. What standards were to be observed by judges in making their decisions? (Chap. 16.)
4. What laws are found in Deuteronomy relating to the protection of employees?
5. What was the purpose in requiring the Hebrew people to offer the first of their fruits and flocks?
6. What provisions were made to instruct the people in the laws of the land?

7. What provisions were made to secure a leader to take the place of Moses?
8. What was the purpose of God's laws as revealed through Moses?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Select three main types of laws found in Deuteronomy.
2. Compare the Hebrew idea of justice, "an eye for an eye", with present day standards of justice.
3. Give the occasion for the writing of the song of Moses.
4. Describe the work of Moses as a leader and an organizer.

JOSHUA

The New Leader.—The story of Joshua's leadership follows immediately upon his appointment as Moses' successor. The directions given by Moses were carried out. A miraculous crossing of the Jordan is recorded. Jericho and other settlements of the land were seized. Memorial stones were set up to honor Jehovah and his leadership. Fighting their way to possession, under the leadership of Joshua, the land was divided among the tribes. The struggle against those who had been dispossessed of their towns and lands was severe. Each tribe was a group by itself. There was not the strength and organization which would have obtained if they had been the united tribes of Israel. Joshua gave a farewell address and died at the age of one hundred and ten years.

A Prophet Hero.—In the Hebrew Bible Joshua is counted among the early prophets. He is the connect-

ing personality between the wilderness wandering under the leadership of Moses and the period of the Judges in Canaan. We think of Joshua as the hero rather than the author of the book which bears his name. The book probably was written, as were those preceding, during the latter part of the seventh century B. C.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What difficulties did the people meet upon entering the Promised Land?
2. What were God's instructions to Joshua after his appointment?
3. At what approximate date was Canaan invaded?
4. In what way was the land divided among the people?
5. What was the substance of Joshua's farewell address?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the Hebrew's attitude toward the rites and customs of the conquered Canaanites.
2. Compare the work of Joshua with that of Moses.

SUMMARY

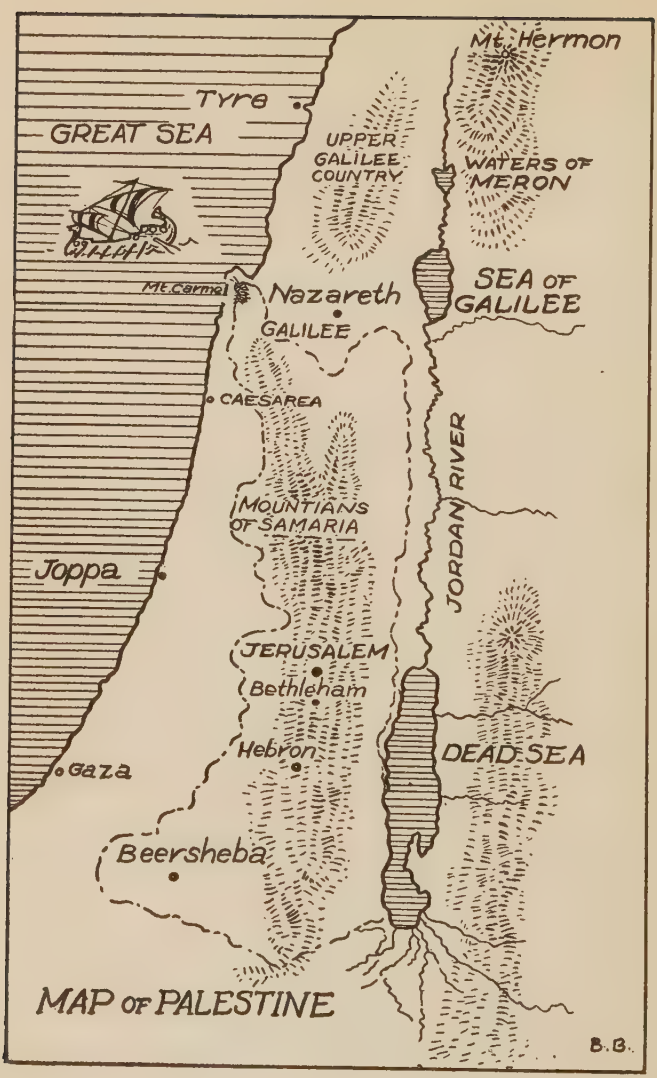
Historical.—We have considered a period which cannot be measured accurately in years. From creation to Abraham the marks of time are hard to establish, but there is no lack of evidence of great movements with world-wide significance. The human race started with a single man. A family was soon in Eden. Then followed a human race which before long was divided

and subdivided until the chosen family, or race, was a very small and enslaved unit surrounded by its well established contemporaries. The development of these people, under the leadership of patriarchs and great prophets, has been traced. They have become somewhat organized and have settled in a land which is called their own by right of the promise of God and their own efforts at conquest. Their chief characters have believed that they received messages from God and that through obedience to God's commands they have prospered. The period closes with Israel settled in Canaan, but experiencing frequent hostile attacks from the former inhabitants whom they had dispossessed of their towns and lands.

Literary.—A close study of the contents of these six books reveals evidence that no one of the books was written wholly at the time of the events recorded. Some material doubtless belongs to later periods than the one we are now considering. But as the books present themselves today we discover narrative, legal, ceremonial, prophetic and poetical literature. We have observed that the several kinds are not grouped nor classified as such but that they are used to suit the purpose of the writers.

Ethical and Religious.—Doubtless, then as now, the two were one; the ethical being the expression in conduct of the ideals established by their religious ideas. Israel has accepted the authority of a single personal God. There may have been other gods but they were all inferior to Jehovah. Sin was disobedience to God. Polygamy was sanctioned by the early Hebrews. A

wife was the property of her husband; the unmarried woman was the property of her father. He might sell her if he chose. Chastity and faithfulness were emphasized and strict obedience of children to their parents was not only in the Decalogue, but rigorously enforced. The Hebrews held high regard for an oath, that is a promise to do a certain thing; and we observe a development of the sense of justice. There are records of actions on the part of the Hebrews in this and later periods which we have difficulty in recognizing as worthy in the lives of God-directed people. We do well to remember that they were pioneers in the realm of morality and religion. The product of many generations of thought and experience, guided and inspired by a variety of revelations, and crowned by the presence on this earth of the sinless, teaching Christ, make it unfair to judge the standards of that early time by the ideals of our own civilization. Neither God, nor what is right, has changed, but men have inherited a growing appreciation of God as well as of goodness, mercy and justice. This recognition of difference is not in the nature of an apology for what a modern student finds disturbing in the early records, but it should help him to understand. This principle applies all through the study of the Bible as well as in extra-Biblical literature.


Mt. Hermon
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CAESAREA
JORDAN RIVER
MOUNTIANS OF SAMARIA
Joppa
JERUSALEM
Bethleham
Hebron
DEAD SEA
Gaza
Beersheba
MAP OF PALESTINE
B.B.

SEVENTH INQUIRY

WHAT WERE THE STRUGGLES FOR GOVERNMENT? JUDGES: A SUCCESSION OF EXPERIMENTS

Duties of a Judge.—The book of Judges records the events immediately following those recorded in Joshua and introduces six centuries of national struggle. A judge was a tribal leader around whom one or more tribes rallied in war against the Canaanites or other enemies. He might rise to prominence from any tribe and at any time. There was no rule of succession of judges. The judge approached the status of tribal king. First of all he was a leader in war, but he might also be civil governor or judge of his people in time of peace. The more prominent judges were Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Othniel. A woman named Deborah was a heroine to whose honor a song was dedicated, 5:2-31. Jotham's fable of the trees looking for a king is another kind of literature which reflects conditions connected with Gideon's son Abimelech, who posed as king.

A Period of Transition.—During the early part of this period the people were engaged in many battles against the Canaanites, Amalekites, Midianites and Moabites. As they had time for settled life there was a transition from shepherding to agricultural pursuits.

The products were grain, wine, oil, figs, milk and meat. Whatever surplus was raised could be exchanged with Phoenician traders for clothing, utensils and decorated ware from Egypt and the East.

The Lack of Stability.—Later in the period of the Judges the new pleasures afforded by a settled life, together with the Baal worship of the Canaanites, led to voluptuousness and immorality. Looking back over the history of the Judges one becomes conscious of the undulating experiences of these people. They start off strongly following a new leader. Soon they have sinned and are punished. Next they repent and are delivered. A new leader is proclaimed and the cycle starts again and is followed by the same order. The writer of Judges interprets every misfortune as direct punishment from God for the misdeeds of the people. While some records may have been written while the history was being made, the book doubtless took its permanent form at a later time.

The short story of Ruth, which reflects the pastoral life of this time, will be treated with other late writings.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To whom was the name "Judges" applied?
2. What were the conditions that the people had to face during this experimental period?
3. What was the significance of Jotham's fable of the trees?
4. How did the people interpret their disasters?
5. What type of people did the Hebrews prove themselves to be by gradually taking possession of the new land?
6. Of what value is the story of Samson?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the five most important characters in Judges and describe their work.
2. What is the significance of Judges 17:6 and Judges 21:25?
3. Trace the gradual occupation of the land of Canaan.

I AND II SAMUEL: THE NATION ESTABLISHED AND PROSPEROUS

The Prophet Samuel.—In the Hebrew Bible the books of Samuel and Kings appear as one of the early prophetic-historical books. Samuel, Elijah, Elisha and Nathan were the best known of the early prophets. They were spokesmen for God and the people, to whom the kings listened and whose admonitions they sometimes obeyed. Samuel was very closely connected with the first two Hebrew kings. While exercising the office of judge, Samuel anointed Saul to become king. Saul led his people against Philistines, Amalekites and other troublesome neighbors. Finally, seeing that an important battle was going against him, Saul commanded his armor-bearer to kill him. Obedience to this order being refused, Saul fell upon his own sword and died. The first king had made a good start but a poor finish.

King David.—II Samuel records the kingship of David, the founding of a dynasty which lasted for more than four centuries, first over Judah with Hebron as his capital, and eight years later, over all Israel, in what is known as the United Kingdom. By a great

struggle David's army wrested the fortified city of Jerusalem from the Jebusites and made it his capital. The Ark of the Covenant, which years before had been captured by the Philistines, was brought to Jerusalem and plans were made for building a temple on the top of Mt. Moriah as the permanent home of the Ark and place of worship and sacrifice.

The Character of David.—The shepherd lad who was called upon to defend his people against their enemies, the Philistines, to comfort his tall king Saul in his melancholia, who spared Saul's life when he might have taken it, loved the king's son Jonathan sincerely and in many respects was a strong king, had a great moral and religious struggle. He tried to be a fair judge and trusted God for necessary wisdom and strength. He did some outrageous things socially, but also repented heartily. He is credited with many lofty ideas recorded in the Psalms and his love for his rebellious son Absolom continued to the end. He was not perfect, but he is considered the greatest of Israel's kings and when we remember that he had slight advantages of culture and was only a step removed from the shepherd's lonely life, much credit is due him. He was a composite of courage and humility, of strong passions and impulsive actions. His piety included penitence, praise, sorrow and joy. He practised polygamy, having several wives and concubines. Slaves formed a part of his household wealth and equipment. As king he made, interpreted and applied the laws. II Samuel closes with David's song of triumph and his last words.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What events caused the Hebrews to plead for a king? (I Samuel 1-9.)
2. What caused the downfall of Saul according to Chapters 13 and 15?
3. Under what circumstances was David anointed king? (I Samuel 16, II Samuel 2.)
4. Why was the capital changed from Hebron to Jerusalem? This was the culmination of what great movement?
5. What was the appeal of David to his generation? What is it to ours?
6. What was the influence of Samuel upon the religious and civil life?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Tell about the loss and recovery of the Ark of the Covenant.
2. Study the incidents which reveal Jonathan as a man of strong character and great courage.
3. Compare the life and work of Saul and of David.

I AND II KINGS

King Solomon.—This record now edited in two parts carries on the story of the kingdom from the last days of David to the capture of King Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar (in recent books spelled Nebuchadrezzar). Solomon, the son of David, inherited a strong kingdom which had a record of military success, political standing, remarkable loyalty and prosperity. He married a daughter of the king of Egypt. God promised Solomon wisdom and the king is known in history as a

man of wisdom. He had the honor of building the temple at Jerusalem, covering the rock crown of Mt. Moriah where Abraham had gone to offer Isaac, and which David had purchased as a suitable place on which to offer burnt offerings to Jehovah. This temple was the pride of the Hebrews and the center of their religion. When it was destroyed another took its place. There was a succession of temples on this site. Later a Christian church appropriately succeeded the temples and now the Mosque of Omar covers the rock. The Mosque of Omar is often referred to as the Dome of the Rock.

Wisdom and Luxury.—King Solomon attracted attention far and wide for his wealth and his wisdom. The Queen of Sheba was amazed when she flattered him with a visit. But the king's luxurious living and extravagant spending was a crushing burden on his people against which they rebelled. Solomon bought ships and strove to establish commerce as a means of securing wealth, but when he died his kingdom was bankrupt. Rehoboam, with his extravagant ideas, took the throne, which resulted in the revolt of the northern tribes. Israel chose Jeroboam as their king. The decline of Hebrew power began with that event.

Two Kingdoms.—The remainder of the second book of Kings records the parallel histories of the two kingdoms. Elijah and Elisha, two prophets of this period, tried to keep the worship of Jehovah pure and undefiled, but foreign influences prevailed with kings and people until the worship of Baal all but won the day. Israel in the north was first to fall before the

foreign power of Sennacherib. Judah maintained a kingdom until captured by Nebuchadrezzar in 586 B. C., when Jerusalem was devastated. The temple, royal palace, city wall and many houses were destroyed. Many citizens were killed and thousands carried away captives to Babylon.

Date and Author.—When and by whom the books of Kings were written is not stated in the text. The books show evidence of having been made by selection from earlier and more extensive records: one from the time of David and another, "The book of the acts of Solomon" (I Kings 11:41). During the exile is commonly accepted as the time when this work was done.

Summary of the Period of the Kings.—We have thought of this period from the first judge to the Babylonian exile as one of discipline. We have seen two kingdoms made one, and the kings David and Solomon reign over the United Kingdom with a splendor that amazed their neighbors. The kingdom was divided because of the burden of taxation caused by the luxury of Solomon. This division may have tended to relieve the burden of taxation, but it did not stop luxurious living and extravagant spending. The country was densely populated and production of the soil was intensified to the fullest extent. Many public buildings were constructed and elaborately furnished. We read of silk clothing, rich draperies, ivory couches, expensive wines, rare and costly foods and a variety of precious gems and other ornaments.

Religious life grew more and more formal, dependence being placed upon the sacrifices and ceremonies of the priests. There was now an aristocracy. There were still shepherds in the land but their wealth enabled them to live at home and send their flocks out under the care of hired herdsmen. The great plains of Sharon, Esdraelon and Gennesaret produced their crops of wheat, barley, herbs and fruit in abundance. Thousands of bushels of wheat were available from the Lebanon valley to the north. Terraced hillsides maintained fruitful vineyards. The ever-present olive tree bore fruit and oil. Some native timber still grew on the mountains and in the canyons. There were merchants, bankers, tradesmen, travelers, priests, prophets, kings, soldiers and society drones.

There had been the rigor of discipline, but the period closes with a discouraged people. The Hebrews had risen from slavery and nomads of the desert to the status of a kingdom recognized and at one time feared by their aggressive neighbors. Under the deteriorating influence of idleness, luxury, extravagance and conscienceless religion, they dropped to the status of captives and were carried away to a strange land. We leave them in the Babylonian captivity or exile.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the function of the prophets as revealed in I and II Kings?
2. What outstanding events mark the reign of Solomon?
3. Why did the reign of Solomon make an impression on later centuries?

4. Why was Elijah called "the troubler of Israel"?
5. Who were Elijah and Elisha? Whom did they serve?
6. What caused the fall of the divided kingdom? What became of the people?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Trace the events which led to the division of the kingdom.
2. Indicate the changes of occupations of this period. In what way did the introduction of foreign labor add to their social problems?
3. Discuss the religious changes which took place as related in I and II Kings.

EIGHTH INQUIRY

WHO WERE THE PROPHETS?

The Voice of the Prophet.—The prophets were a succession of men who wielded a great influence in their time. A prophet was a man who had a message from Jehovah. He strove to keep before his king and people the claims of a moral and religious life. He did not hesitate to denounce the king for immoral and irreligious conduct. The interpretation of the signs of the times was his task. Sometimes he foretold the disaster which he saw lurking in the future; often his prophecy was a sermon of righteousness; to meet a pressing need he performed a miracle. At times his admonitions were heeded, for there were those who loved the prophets, but others who hated them.

Some people welcomed the prophets to their homes. By others they were scorned, pursued in wrath, and even stoned. A king would fear the prophet, but at the same time ignore his advice.

We shall now consider the prophets in their chronological order.

The Pre-Literary Prophets.—This is a term indicating the work of such men as Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, who were serious and God-appointed directors of religious and moral affairs. They claimed neither home,

temple nor political appointment. Samuel is best known for the part that he played in the anointing and declaring of kings. He was considered a wise man who had a wholesome influence with kings and people. His chief activity was in Judah.

Jehovah or Baal.—Elijah, whose name means "My God is Jehovah", has been called "the grandest and most romantic character that Israel ever produced". He went about the country wearing long hair, with a hair-covered skin girdle about his loins and a cape or mantle of sheepskin. During the kingship of Ahab he prophesied a three years' drouth in Israel. The resulting famine caused great suffering and Ahab addressed Elijah as the troubler of Israel. Elijah was greatly incensed by the attention that was being given to the worship of Baal which had been encouraged by Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. He called a meeting at Mt. Carmel of the faithful to Jehovah as well as of the followers of Baal, and there, through bringing fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifice, obtained a vow from the people to serve God faithfully. To escape the wrath of the king, he fled to the south and took refuge in the hills. Later we read of his ascent to heaven in a chariot of fire and a whirlwind. His mantle fell upon his successor, Elisha.

Elisha.—The name Elisha means "God is salvation". He considered it his duty to carry on the work of his predecessor Elijah, but he went about it in a different way. He dressed as others did, lived among the people, and was the friend of many. He was an advisor of kings, and helped to bring relief to the needy. Several

miracles, such as increasing the widow's oil, sweetening the water of a fountain and multiplying loaves for those who were in need and cleansing lepers are recorded.

The strong emphasis by these prophets on righteousness as a quality of life prepared the way for the prophets of the eighth century, for whom certain books are named.

The Literary Prophets.—The pre-literary prophets did not record their utterances, although the historical books contain some of their messages. The literary prophets did not substitute writing for the spoken word, but recorded what they had spoken. In some instances they may have recorded what they were prevented from speaking directly to their people.

The term "major prophets" has been used very generally to designate the five longest books, called prophetic. The remaining twelve shorter records have been called the minor prophets, and are also referred to as the twelve. As our approach to this study is historical and literary, it seems best to treat these books in the order of the appearance and ministry of the several prophets.

Eighth Century Prophets.—The first group, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, appeared in this order and were contemporaries of the eighth century. Because their ministry was before the Babylonian captivity, or exile, they are called pre-exilic prophets. As we have seen, these were not the first prophets, but they took a forward step in what had become a prophetic movement. Their teachings were not new, nor was their

chief concern to reveal what was going to happen in either the immediate or distant future. They gave renewed emphasis to earlier Hebrew teachings and made vigorous application of religious truths to personal and social conduct. There is, therefore, a pronounced ethical message recorded in the prophecies.

The utterances of these spokesmen for God had also a marked political significance. Assyrian power was threatening the very existence of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The prophets warned the people of impending disaster if they did not repent and reform. The Northern Kingdom fell in 721 B. C. A like fate threatened Judah only twenty years later.

Political Danger.—As the student reviews the history of Judah and Israel during the time of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, he discovers a growing consciousness of deterioration.

Social Conditions.—A consideration of the social conditions of the eighth century reveals that where there was luxury there was also poverty, and that where noblemen increased their estates there were also peasants. Where wealth and poverty exist side by side injustice and inhumanity are observed. The moral stamina of the people is weakened, and social obligations are considered lightly.

Trust in ceremonial religion has allowed the people to forget that Jehovah, who delivered them from the bondage of Egypt and led them through their wanderings in the wilderness, dealt patiently but vigorously with them in the discipline of generations of judges and kings.

The Task of the Prophets.—To meet these conditions and to right them was the task of this quartet of literary prophets of the eighth century. The sermons and admonitions of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah are recorded in books that bear their names. Although closely related in time and effort, each had his independent message, task and influence. We shall consider them now individually.

Amos.—The first of the literary prophets came from Judah into Israel about 760-750 B. C. Although Amos did not pose as a prophet, declaring that he was a herdsman and orchardist, he is recognized as a prophet of righteousness and social justice. His message of warning and admonition to Samaria was resented by the priest of Bethel who said, "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." (Amos 7:12, 13.) He sees that unless the rich cease to oppress the poor and the practice of injustice is displayed by actual justice, corruption corrected and punishment for wrong visited upon offenders, the nation is doomed. He tells his hearers that God is not glorified nor duly worshiped in their sacrifices and festivals. He is out of patience with them and urges that they "let justice roll down like floods and right like an unfailing stream". Thus Amos introduces what we call the ethical message of the prophets. He would have religion show a moral content and exert a true ethical influence. While urging these moral reforms within the nation he warns that

unless they are carried out the nation will be destroyed and also predicts the fall of enemy nations. He closes his prophecy with a promise of restoration for the faithful.

Hosea.—The only one of the literary prophets whose home was in Israel was Hosea. He lived in the last half of the eighth century. The first verse says that the prophet lived "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel".

Hosea tried to show Israel that the attitude of the government and people toward God was like that of an unfaithful wife to her husband. In chapter four he pictures the moral and religious condition of Israel in an appalling manner. Both Israel and Judah are called upon to repent of their idolatry and immorality. Israel is accused of being like a lazy baker, a cake baked on but one side, a silly dove, a tricked and trapped bird. The failure of the people morally will result in destruction, ruin and exile. The eleventh chapter presents the love and forgiving grace of God, and the fourteenth chapter is an urgent invitation for the sinful people to return to God: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of

Lebanon. . . . Who is wise, that he may understand these things? prudent, that he may know them? for the ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein." (Hosea 14:4-7, 9.)

If Hosea was a priest, as some suggest, he had a higher conception of his office than was shared by many of his fellow priests. In showing the sinful practices of his time and urging a return to God he helped to raise the spiritual tone of his people and to exalt Jehovah as the God of righteousness and love. The loss of Gilead and Galilee to Tiglath-Pileser in 734 B. C. and the complete fall of Israel in 721 B. C. under the attack of Sargon are fulfillments of the prophecy of Hosea.

Isaiah.—The greatest and best known of the prophets was Isaiah. He is introduced in chapter 1, verse 1, as follows: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah, and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." The circumstances of his call as a prophet he has related in 6:1: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." It is thought that his work as a prophet began about 740 B. C. and continued for forty or fifty years. This was a very critical period in Hebrew history. Isaiah lived in or near Jerusalem and appears to have been well educated and with sufficient income to make it possible for him to take a lively interest in the affairs of his people. His messages show him to have been a

statesman. We may consider them under three general headings; political, religious and social. His political leadership is indicated in his warning to Judah and Israel that trouble is imminent. These governments considered making alliances with strong neighboring nations, hoping thus to protect themselves against invaders. Isaiah protested against this policy on the grounds that such an arrangement would indicate a lack of faith in God as their strong protector. In some passages he assures them that while destruction is to sweep down upon them some of their people will be spared. To this remnant God will entrust the future of his people. In 9:6 he sets forth the Messianic promise which has become so familiar to Christians: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." (9:6-7.) See also 11:1-2. This promise was intended to rally the faithful to a realization of a great hope.

The Messianic expectation was religious as well as political for the Messiah was to be Emmanuel, God with his people. Isaiah insisted that God was out of patience with the pompous worship carried on in the temple and that sacrifices meant nothing to him, "O,

house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah." (2:5.)

Much of the emphasis of the prophet's message is upon social conditions. He likens the Hebrews to a vineyard which a man had planted and cared for but which yielded sour instead of edible grapes. "Let me sing for my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard." (5:1-7.)

Where God looked for justice and righteousness he found oppression and misery. Lack of faithfulness in the family, honesty in business and charity toward the unfortunate stirred the soul of the prophet to the point of declaring a series of woes against his own people unless they repented. He insisted that repentance must show its sincerity in strict fair dealing in all business matters and actual rejection of immoral habits. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (26:20-21.) "Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with wine!" (28:1.) See also 30:1-5.

One cannot read Isaiah without realizing that the prophet was a man of marked literary ability. He must have been an orator when he spoke to have written such words as appear in chapter 32:1-8, 16-20, 34,

35, which begins, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice." Chapters 36 to 39 are actual history found also in II Kings 18-20. It is thought that they are placed in this prophecy because of the importance of the prophet in this historical period. This section closes with the following words: "Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken. He said more-over, For there shall be peace and truth in my days."

The remainder of this great book, chapters 40 to 66, shows unmistakable evidence of belonging to a much later period, and will be treated with the post-exilic prophets.

Micah.—The first verse of this short prophecy of seven chapters tells us that Micah was a Morashite, which means that he lived in the lowlands of Judah. Reference to the kings of his time tells us that he was a younger contemporary of Isaiah. The book which bears his name is made up of a number of oracles aimed at Samaria, the Northern Kingdom, and Jerusalem, as the capital of the Southern Kingdom. His pronouncement against Samaria is found in 1:6-7, "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as places for planting vineyards; and I will pour down the stones thereof," and against Jerusalem in 3:9-12, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest." These passages of woe are immediately followed by a promise of restoration in the later days when "Jeho-

vah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and it shall be exalted above the hills and people shall flow unto it." (Micah 4:1-8.) The fact that the prophet lived in the country among the poor may account for his antipathy to city life and the practice of its citizens. His denunciations of those who oppress the poor are well known: "Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy humiliation shall be in the midst of thee; and thou shalt put away, but shalt not save; and that which thou savest will I give up to the sword."

In the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C., a bronze plate marks the alcove of religion. The verse of scripture chosen to best represent this department of literature is Micah 6:8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Many have called this the greatest single verse of the Old Testament. It presents forcibly the effect of true religion in revelation, worship and social justice and compassion.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why are Samuel, Elijah and Elisha listed as pre-literary prophets?
2. What are some of the outstanding teachings of the prophets?
3. What wrongs did Amos try to correct? How did he enlarge the people's conception of God?
4. How did Hosea's own personal experiences give him a clearer knowledge of God and His relation to men?

5. What experience brought Isaiah to a realization of his life work? Isaiah 6.
6. Why was Micah called a prophet of the poor?
7. What is the meaning of the parable of the vineyard? Micah 6.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Make a comparison of II Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 36-39.
2. Give the qualities which made Isaiah the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.
3. Relate the prophecies found in Isaiah and Micah to the story of Christ as found in the New Testament. Micah 4-7, Isaiah 6-12.
4. Learn Micah's definition of religion.

PROPHETS OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Historical Setting.—Before considering the prophets of the seventh century we will do well to note some of the outstanding political events of this period. The fall of Damascus in 732 B. C., that of Samaria in 721 B. C., and the declining power of Judah to the city of Jerusalem in 701 B. C., all indicated that in a short time Jerusalem itself would be taken by an outside power. Hezekiah, the king, made peace with Sennacherib, the invader, by paying a large sum of money and announcing allegiance to the Assyrian power. The natural expectation would have been that Jerusalem would soon lose its identity, and its people would be scattered; but Isaiah gave assurance that Sennacherib would not again attack Jerusalem, and that the city would be saved from his power. This came true.

Nearly a century later an invasion on the part of King Necho II, of Egypt, threatened the very existence of what was left of Judah. However, Necho was defeated at the battle of Carchemish by Nebuchadrezzar in 605 B. C., Nineveh having fallen the previous year. This meant that from 605 B. C. until 538 B. C. the Hebrews were under Babylonian power. It was in 587 B. C. that Jerusalem revolted against Babylonia, was defeated, and many of its people deported to Babylonia. The conditions under which they lived in Babylonia were favorable to the development of their religion and there is evidence that much of what became the Hebrew Bible took definite form during this period. The prophets of this time in the order of their appearance were Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The constant and dreaded enemy of Judah and Israel during the eighth century was Assyria. During the seventh century Babylonia, to the south of Assyria, rose to power and captured the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, in 606 B. C. Each of three short prophecies of the early part of this period has a distinct objective or point of emphasis.

Zephaniah was stirred by the invasion of Asia Minor by the Scythians who threatened Philistia and Assyria, always enemies of Judah. He was concerned for the safety of his own people under these conditions. The reform under Josiah had lost its grip upon the people of Judah. The prophet saw many and serious evils among the rulers, priests and wealthy citizens, and predicted a day of doom. God was to interfere in a

miraculous way. This kind of prophecy is called apocalypse. Here is the first appearance of this style of appeal which is increasingly noticeable from this time on. It has been observed that apocalyptical expressions were born in times of great stress and always indicated that God would bring about his purposes in a miraculous manner.

After pronouncing doom upon Philistia, Ethiopia and Assyria, and declaring judgment against Nineveh, Zephaniah closes his brief prophecy with a promise of the deliverance of Jerusalem and the world-wide renown of Israel.

Nahum, about 607 B. C., spoke out boldly against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, as being the chief enemy of God's people and the obstacle of God's will being done in the world. The wrath of God is pronounced upon Nineveh. God is called an avenger, for Nineveh has plotted evil against the Lord. Nahum closes his expression of feeling against Nineveh with these expressive words: "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles are at rest; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them. There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?" (3:18, 19.)

Habakkuk.—A contemporary of Zephaniah and Nahum was Habakkuk. His prophecy seems to have been written soon after the fall of Nineveh. He observes that Babylonia has succeeded Assyria as a foreign enemy and sees no hope for Judah in this change;

unpunished evil-doers are in his land. Even though Babylon may be sent to chasten them, how will this procedure actually bring about God's rule among his people? Some expressions of wisdom in this book of three short chapters have helped to keep it in the memory of Bible readers and students. "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous shall live by his faith. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity! For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. What profiteth the graven image, that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, even the teacher of lies, that he hath fashioneth its form trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? For though the fig-tree shall not flourish, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no food; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in Jehovah, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength; and he maketh my feet like hinds' feet and will make me to walk upon my high places." (2:4, 12, 14, 18; 3:17-19.)

Jeremiah, who was born at Anathoth, a village three miles north of Jerusalem, 650 B. C., was called to the prophetic office in 626 B. C. Because of his youth he doubted the genuineness of the call but was assured that God had a work for him to do. After the death of Josiah in the battle of Megiddo, in which Egypt gained control of Judah, the reforms instituted by the king lost their hold upon the people. Jeremiah

tried courageously to arouse the people from their immorality. He told them that if they did not honor God with righteous lives they would, as a punishment, lose their city and their temple. Priests and prophets considered him a disturbing intruder and cried out against him. Some of Jeremiah's speeches were read to Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, who ordered them to be burned.

Jeremiah counselled against alliances with Egypt and Assyria, but later advised that a peaceful surrender be made to the threatening Babylonian king, Nebuchadrezzar. He was imprisoned as unpatriotic and later became a fugitive in Egypt. Thus ended the forty years of heroic and courageous service of the prophet. Thousands of his countrymen were in Babylonia, prosperous but captive. Others had a miserable existence in Judah, and still other thousands had found refuge in Egypt.

A short book of Lamentations over the desolation and misery of conquered Jerusalem bears also the name of Jeremiah. It records in poetic form God's judgment upon Judah; a lament and prayer for Jerusalem, a comparison of the past and present conditions of the stricken city, and closes with the nation's prayer for compassion.

Jeremiah is considered the most spiritual and personally pious of the Hebrew prophets.

Ezekiel.—A younger contemporary of Jeremiah was Ezekiel, who was born in Jerusalem and trained as a priest. His early prophecies precede the fall of Jerusalem. He saw a power, likened to a storm cloud,

descend from the north upon Jerusalem. Like the other prophets of his time, Ezekiel gave a message of doom until he was taken a captive to Babylonia in 587 B. C. He then consoled and encouraged his fellow captives. His influence is credited with forming the ceremonial and ethical teachings emphasized in later Judaism. The imagery used by Ezekiel may have been readily understood by his contemporaries but is difficult for the modern interpreter. Chapters 40-48 record a vision of restored Jerusalem with rules for a new temple and community life. The work of Ezekiel won for him such titles as "the father of Judaism" and "the prophet of the individual". There is ethical instruction in his writings which gives us an insight into the social practices and abuses of his time: To be blest of God one must be just and righteous; he must not look upon idols, nor commit robbery; faithfulness to his family and charity to his neighbors must be rules of his life; oppression, taking usury and indulgence in iniquity are strictly forbidden.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What were the characteristics of the ideal age for which Zephaniah looked? Chapter 3:14-20.
2. What was Nahum's conception of God?
3. In what form is the book of Habakkuk written? What was Habakkuk's expression of faith? Chapter 3.
4. What did Jeremiah consider to be his life work? Chapter 1:4-10.
5. What is meant by "the Exile"?

6. Who was the prophet of the Exile and what was his threefold task?
7. What is the theme of the five poems which make up the book of Lamentations?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Describe the general religious conditions of the Jews before the Exile.
2. Give a summary of the life of Jeremiah.
3. Discuss the statement that Ezekiel is called "the father of Judaism".

NINTH INQUIRY

WHAT WERE THE INFLUENCES OF THE CAPTIVITY?

The Later Prophetic Writings.—The remaining books of prophecy belong to a period of nearly four centuries. The authors or heroes of these books are often referred to as the prophets of the captivity and restoration. They have to do with Judaism as it was forming in Babylonia as well as in and around Jerusalem. The leaders of the Jews politically and religiously were among the thirty to forty thousand who were temporarily settled in Babylonia. A part of the ministry of Ezekiel had been to this group.

The Great Prophet of the Restoration, Isaiah, 40-66, is an unnamed but truly great prophet in Jewish Babylonia. The record of his messages has become a part of the book of Isaiah. It is no less important because it reflects political, social and religious conditions of a later period than Isaiah 1-39. We wish that we knew the name of this great prophet but are grateful for the record of his prophecies. He may have returned to Jerusalem before he wrote.

The prophet exhorted the Jews to remember with gratitude and obedience the God who had led their forefathers and who was in process of saving them. He pictured the wisdom, power and superiority of

Jehovah in truly great poetry. Out of the heart-breaking experiences of the past rises the picture of a suffering servant who is to be a Deliverer. The recorded experiences of Jesus Christ five centuries later have a marked resemblance to the prophets' vision. He cheers his people on with the assurance of a glorious triumph. There are many choice passages in Isaiah 40-66, as well as in 1-39, which are well known and precious to Christians.

In the Homeland.—The remnant of Judah which was left in the homeland was larger in numbers, but less likely to start a rebellion than those who had been led away captives to Babylonia. They cultivated the land and tended flocks around Jerusalem. Doubtless at least simple services and some sacrifices were held where the temple had stood. Two prophets who helped to rebuild the temple were Haggai and Zechariah. This work was not undertaken until eighteen years after Cyrus had conquered Babylon and had given permission to some of the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Comparatively few had chosen to leave the fertile fields of Babylonia for the barren hills of Judea.

Haggai delivered his messages in the latter part of 520 B. C., sixty-six years after the destruction of Jerusalem. He aroused the people to action in rebuilding the temple and encouraged the hope that the Jews would soon be freed from foreign power and their kingdom established under Jerubbabel. This hope stimulated what became an organized religion of legalism which was dominant at the birth of Christ.

Zechariah was a contemporary of Haggai and assisted in the work of rebuilding. He was a priest and, therefore, very naturally built up the worship ceremonialism and forwarded the cause of legalism which we have noted in the work of Haggai. These companion prophets did a valuable work among their people in a critical time and left a record which helps the student to an understanding of the religious and political trend of that period.

Malachi means "my messenger". The name may apply to the author of the last book printed in the Old Testament. This message belongs to the time of Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra and Nehemiah, that is, 460-450 B. C. The prophet urges righteousness according to the law, faithfulness to marriage obligations, and payment of taxes and tithes. The priests as well as the people are exhorted to be sincere and faithful. "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts," and "Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it," are the most familiar sentences of this prophecy.

Obadiah, a contemporary of Malachi, is credited with the shortest book of the Old Testament, a single chapter of twenty-one sentences. He denounces the

Edomites who had shared with the Babylonians in the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B. C. These descendants of Esau are to be destroyed, but Jehovah's people on Mount Zion are to be saved. Obadiah is classed among the narrowly nationalistic voices of Judaism. There were prophets who had room in their thinking for God's blessing upon other nations than their own, particularly the Great Prophet of the Restoration, but Obadiah was not one of them.

Joel, the second in order of the minor prophets, is an apocalypse. The book may have been written about 400 B. C., or even a century later. The three short chapters record a devastating visitation of locusts which is interpreted as doom for all enemies, but indicating the coming of the day of Jehovah to his people. The narrow valley of Jehoshaphat which is between the temple area of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives is made the place where Israel, called to war, is to humble all enemies. It is referred to as the valley of decision. The closing verses picture abundance for Judah but desolation for the nations. Several sentences, well known to Christians, Joel 2:1, 2, 13, 28 and 32, are found in this apocalypse.

Jonah follows Obadiah in position in the Bible, but the hero was not a contemporary. The man referred to as "Jonah, the son of Amittai" (1:1), lived about 775 B. C. This book was probably written about 300 B. C. It is a story rather than a prophecy. It represents the attitude of exclusiveness held by many of the Jews. Other nations were their enemies and therefore could not receive the favor of Jehovah. If the same

principles of interpretation are applied to this story as are used in studying the parables of Jesus a great missionary lesson is revealed.

Daniel is printed as the last of the major prophets. There are but twelve chapters in Daniel, while Hosea, the first of the minor prophets, has fourteen chapters. However, Daniel is longer than Hosea. The first six chapters record the story of Daniel, who, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, was taken captive by Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon. The experiences which he had there are well known and are recorded to emphasize his unfailing devotion to Jehovah. The impression made on Darius is made known in 6:25-27. The remainder of the book is a record of visions, and forms an apocalypse. Kings of the north and south, east and west, shall meet in conflict. The faithful to Jehovah shall stand and see the deliverance of his people.

Daniel is not in the list of the books of the Hebrew Bible of 200 B. C. The conclusion reached by many scholars is that this story of Israel's early hero was given new emphasis during the troublous days of the Maccabees and took literary form about 165 B. C.

Summary of Hebrew Prophecy.—Our study of the prophets should lead us to the following observations:

1. The earlier prophets, such as Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, were seers who went among the people and sometimes appeared before the king as spokesmen for Jehovah. They did deeds of mercy as occasions arose. They were an important factor in politics and religion. They left no written messages. Others

wrote somewhat concerning them but they relied upon their personal speeches and actions to accomplish their purposes.

2. The literary prophets were supremely interested in the welfare and preservation of their nation. They considered every enemy of the Hebrew people an enemy of Jehovah. Sometimes the threatening foreigner was considered an instrument in the hands of Jehovah to punish Israel. Such punishment was intended, of course, to bring Israel back to full allegiance to Jehovah.
3. Many of the prophets have a distinct ethical message. They urge true, sincere and worthy morality. Some taught and preached the principles which support the modern social message. We have not much encouragement in the thought that the majority of the people, particularly the rich, responded largely to their admonitions. Righteousness was still in the minds of the leaders, and probably of the majority of the less favored, a matter of keeping the law.
4. The later prophets fail to show the high moral tone and challenging ideals of those of the eighth and seventh centuries. Some, failing to see any hope of improvement, predict an event of destruction following which Jehovah will raise up a holy and delivered nation.
5. A deliverer is to be sent who is termed the Messiah, the Anointed One. He will be strong enough to rally Jehovah's chosen people to victory over their enemies. The triumphant nation will stand above

all nations round about. The king shall reign with justice and mercy and be an example of holiness. His kingdom shall never fail.

6. Prophecy at its best includes others than Israel in these great benefits. Nations are pictured running to Jerusalem and clamoring for the blessings of Jehovah. But there is present with many a selfish exclusiveness. Doom, with a smack of satisfaction, is pronounced upon the enemies of Israel.
7. While the books of prophecy are arranged in the Bible after the historical books, we must remember that these men lived, spoke and wrote while the historical events recorded in the earlier books were taking place. Their messages were primarily and emphatically for their own times. Some of the principles which they emphasized apply very well to social conditions of modern times.

   Jesus was familiar with the law and the prophets and justified many of his teachings by reference to these early scriptures. A study of his teachings always should be made in the light of prophecy, not primarily for the sake of determining what has or has not been fulfilled but to warrant a full understanding of their constant message to the religious and social welfare of humanity.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. For what did Haggai appeal?
2. What were the characteristics of the Messianic reign as described by Zechariah?

3. Why was it thought that Isaiah 40-66 was written by a different author than Isaiah 1-39?
4. Why did Isaiah believe that the suffering and pain borne by the people would lead to progress?
5. In what way was Obadiah nationalistic in his thinking?
6. What was the valley of decision as referred to in Joel? Chapter 3.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the people's relation to God before and after the Exile.
2. Give Malachi's main theme.
3. Compare Joel and Daniel.
4. Give the purpose of the book of Daniel.
5. Discuss the Jew's attitude toward foreigners as suggested by the book of Jonah.
6. Discuss Isaiah's contribution to the thought of his time and its value to Biblical literature.

TENTH INQUIRY

WHAT OTHER HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS MAY WE EXAMINE?

Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah originally were one book in the last section of the Hebrew Bible. Probably it was written 300-250 B. C. by a Levite who wanted to summarize the early Hebrew history and to record the main events from the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C., to the close of the Persian rule, 332 B. C. The fact that he leaves out of his account incidents in the lives of the kings which are not to their credit seems to indicate that the chronicler desired to prove that the "good kings" kept the law and the temple worship and were prospered. Much more attention is given to Judah than to the northern kingdom.

Contents.—After giving the geneology of Israel from Adam to David, the chronicler tells the story of David's reign and his preparation for building the temple. The section which in our Bible is called II Chronicles opens with Solomon's reign. The building and dedication of the temple follows. The reigns of the succeeding kings of Judah are briefly recorded. The invasion of Sennacherib, the wealth of Hezekiah, the death of Josiah, an account of the last days of the Kingdom of Judah under Jehoiachim and Zedekiah

and the conquest of Nebuchadrezzar bring the record almost to its close. The closing sentences present Cyrus, king of Persia, giving permission to the Jews in Babylonia to return to Jerusalem: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him, and let him go up." (II Chronicles 36:23.)

Ezra-Nehemiah.—The two books appear in the English Bible presenting what was the second part of Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible. Ezra is the hero of the early part of the book which bears his name. The chapters, called for their hero, Nehemiah, are a part of this record. Together they furnish a history of the period following the captivity. Ezra was a scribe, and Nehemiah a layman; both were given authority to lead Jewish captives in Babylonia back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the city. Many of the Jews had married foreign wives. Ezra ordered that these women should not accompany their husbands to Jerusalem.

The record shows that the heroes Ezra and Nehemiah met with great difficulties in carrying out their purpose. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah rendered assistance. There is difficulty for the reader in making out the chronology, due to the fact that certain events seem to be out of order in the record. The failure to arrange copied sheets correctly may account for this condition.

Esther is a striking story of the third or possibly second century B. C., illustrating the womanly heroism of a Jewess who became the queen of a foreign king, Ahasuerus. By careful planning and heroic action she saved the Jews from a great slaughter. The fact that the name of God is nowhere mentioned in the story has elicited comment from Jewish and Christian readers and scholars. There may have been many similar stories passing orally among the Jews. The stories of Ruth and Jonah, as well as of Esther, were doubtless in this class.

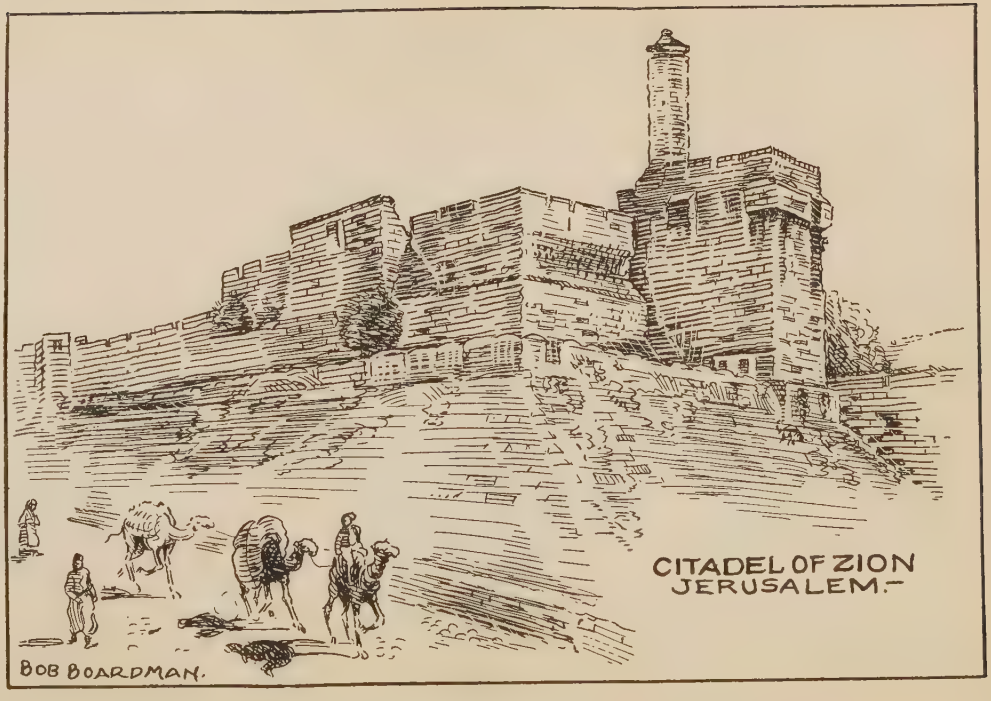
Ruth is a short story reflecting the simple life of the period of the Judges. Ruth, a daughter of Moab, had married a Judean who had died. The young widow returned to Judah with her widowed mother-in-law, Naomi. She found favor in the sight of Boaz who took her as his wife. David was among their descendants. This little book is considered one of the finest stories of the Hebrew literature. We have no clue to the authorship nor date.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What do you consider to be the object of each book of the Chronicles?
2. What is the religious interest of I Chronicles?
3. Write an epitome of II Chronicles.
4. Who were the heroes of Ezra and Nehemiah?
5. What was the purpose of the writer?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the subject matter of I and II Chronicles with that of I and II Samuel and Kings.
2. Compare the reigns of David and Solomon.
3. Discuss the social value of the main events in Ezra and Nehemiah.
4. Discuss the book of Ruth as to literary excellence and ethical significance.
5. Relate the story of Esther and indicate its religious and social value.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JERUSALEM.
BOB BOARDMAN.

ELEVENTH INQUIRY

WHAT POETRY IS THERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Authorized or King James Version of the English Bible is printed as if all the books of the Bible were prose. The American Standard Revised Version, Moulton's Modern Reader's Bible, and modern translations like Moffatt's and J. M. Powis Smith's, present the poetry of the Old Testament in attractive form. Some people have been shocked and grieved to hear reference made to passages in the Bible as poetry. They think that it lowers the dignity and lessens the value of scriptural truth to call it poetry. The conclusion of literary critics is that "poetry is the highest expression of truth". Truth is no less vital because it is given a poetic expression.

Poetry is created by men of imagination who are inspired. Poetic expression is unique and, therefore, is impressive.

Job, Psalms and Proverbs are the most important poetic books of the Bible. Short poems celebrating important events are found in the historical books of the Old Testament. Sometimes the subject of the song was an individual and again it was the chosen people or nation. There are also dirges—songs for the dead—the most important of which are those ascribed to Jere-

miah in Lamentations. Many passages in the prophets, particularly in Isaiah, are poetry. The Song of Songs is a collection of poems.

What Constitutes Hebrew Poetry?—For many years poetry has been recognized by its rhyme and rhythm. Hebrew poetry, like much of our most recent poetry, does not rhyme, either before or after translation, but there is rhythm, a regular measured beat recurring line after line. The distinguishing feature of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This means that a thought presented in one line is, in one of three ways, expressed for emphasis in the second line. In the first and most simple parallelism a statement is made, which is followed by an exact repetition in words or in synonyms:

> "Jehovah reigneth; he is clothed with majesty;
> Jehovah is clothed with strength; he hath girded himself therewith:"
>
> (Psalms 93:1, 2)

In the second type of parallelism the second line is in contrast with the expression of the first line. This is found in Proverbs more frequently than elsewhere:

> "A cheerful heart is a good medicine;
> But a broken spirit drieth up the bones."
>
> (Proverbs 17:22)

The third type of parallelism is called synthetic. The second line completes the thought presented in the first line:

"A good name is rather to be chosen
than great riches,
And loving favor rather than silver
and gold."

(Proverbs 22:1)

There are other instances of parallelism in three and four lines which are related to the forms just quoted.

Some literary editors, like Dr. Moulton, have arranged stanzas of varied length. The book of Job offers a very attractive study in this regard. The 119th Psalm is made up of twenty-two paragraphs or sections of eight lines each. Each of these divisions is named for a letter of the Hebrew alphabet which is the first letter of each line in that section.

The Song of Songs.—One of the most striking of the poetic books is the Song of Songs, ascribed to Solomon. It is not wisdom nor devotional literature. It is simply poetry—love songs and wedding songs. Some have thought that these songs compose a drama, and others hold that the book is a collection of love and wedding songs so arranged as to have some connection. It is an example of simple faithful love on the part of a peasant maid. The king could not understand why she should scorn the luxury which he offered and remain true to her peasant lover. The poet represents the royal lover as pressing his suit with great passion

but honors him by taking the maiden to her home untainted and true to her lover.

Efforts have been made to make the book a symbol of Christ's love for his Church. Such an interpretation fails to honor the Head of the Church. The story of Christ as the Bridegroom and the Church as the Bride cannot be truly represented in this manner.

The Song of Songs, like the book of Esther, is not a book of religious teaching. It is a good example of Hebrew poetry of the kind loved and used by those who were in love. Something of the marriage customs of the time are reflected.

We now turn to a closer consideration of the greatest Hebrew poetry, Psalms and wisdom literature.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by parallelism in Hebrew poetry?
2. Name the five poetic books of the Old Testament.
3. How is Hebrew poetry formed?
4. How do you classify the Song of Songs?
5. What differences in literary structure and subject matter do you note between the several poetic books?
6. Discuss the relative value of poetry as the vehicle of religious thought.

TWELFTH INQUIRY

HOW SHALL WE STUDY THE DEVOTIONAL LITERATURE?

Psalms.—In Hebrew as in English the Psalms were edited in five sections. The most plausible explanation for these divisions is that the number of Psalms in each section made a size of roll or scroll convenient for use and preservation. One observes at once that here we have the same number of books as in the Pentateuch, the Hebrews' first great collection of religious writings.

The book of Psalms offers to the world the greatest devotional literature which has been produced. There are 150 Psalms. Some of them might be divided into several shorter hymns or prayers. They reflect the religious, social and political conditions of the Hebrews over a period of possibly 1000 years. The older Psalms may have been used for generations before they were recorded. A great variety of occasions was served by the Psalms. Some Old Testament students say that nearly 100 authors are represented.

The subjects of the Psalms touch every phase of life and express individual and group reactions to pleasurable and painful experiences. Consequently, we conclude that some Psalms were used for individual

devotion expressing praise, trust or supplication. Others were sung by groups on their way to worship and at the place of worship. Many of the Psalms are suitable for use in Christian worship but some implore evil upon enemies and express confidence in Jehovah as the God of war—thoughts common to their time, but held today as contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and consequently unchristian.

A careful study reveals that singing of the Psalms was often accompanied by stringed instruments. The use of "Selah", which has not been satisfactorily defined, nor its use actually determined, is thought to have indicated some pause in the music or change of presentation.

It is difficult to classify the Psalms closely because the same Psalm may express several widely divergent thoughts. There may be in juxtaposition praise for blessings received and prayer for terrible disaster to the worshiper's enemies. However, an attempt at classification is a helpful exercise. The student is urged to read the Psalms thoughtfully and try to discover their relation to some such simple classification as the following:

I. Individual: praise, thanksgiving, supplication.

II. Psalms of worship: at the temple, elsewhere.

III. National interests.

IV. The annual festivals.

V. Messianic: those which indicate the Hebrew hope of a Deliverer.

It is believed that this great hymn book took permanent form late in the Old Testament period. Most of the Psalms indicate composition and use after the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B. C. There are also Psalms reflecting the political and social conditions of the Maccabean period, as late as 165 B. C. The Psalms were designed, and have been valued, not as history, prophecy nor wisdom, although they reflect all three, but as great devotional literature in poetic form.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why are the Psalms considered the most devotional literature of the Old Testament?
2. Which is the longest Psalm and what is peculiar in its make-up?
3. Select ten Psalms which represent varieties of religious experience and indicate the quality or characteristics which you find in each.
4. In the Hebrew Bible the Psalms were edited in five sections:
   I Psalms 1-41
   II Psalms 42-72
   III Psalms 73-89
   IV Psalms 90-106
   V Psalms 107-150
   Note what difference you observe in subject matter between these different sections.
5. Observe the ethical, religious and social ideals expressed in the Psalms.
6. Compare Psalm 145 with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, 7.

THIRTEENTH INQUIRY

WHAT MESSAGE IS IN THE WISDOM LITERATURE?

The Seer, the Prophet and the Sage each had his place in the Old Testament. Wisdom literature, the product of the Sage, is found in Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Job.

Ecclesiastes.—This book of observations of wise men has often been referred to as the Preacher. The speaker is not a preacher in the sense in which this word is used today. The wise man set forth wise sayings. As he looked upon life he found that there were certain things to be said about good and evil, prosperity and adversity, righteousness and wickedness, reward and punishment. He observed the uncertainty of human life and advised his hearers to make good use of the time while they had it. The first sentence of the book ascribes the sayings to Solomon but there is little doubt that many expressions in the book belong to a later time than that of Solomon.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all of these things God will bring thee into judgment." 11:9. "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days

come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the duty of all men." 12: 1, 13. These words of wisdom have been passed on from generation to generation for many centuries and have doubtless influenced Christians fully as much as they have Jews.

The apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus is thought to have been a part of Ecclesiastes. The last book accepted in the Old Testament canon was this meditation Ecclesiastes upon the frailty and value of life.

Proverbs.—Solomon had a reputation for having a keen insight and is credited with the authorship of many wise sayings. He is said to have written over 3000 proverbs. Not all of these are found in the book of Proverbs. One should observe also that not all of the proverbs are ascribed to Solomon.

The proverbs are very personal in application. Unlike the prophet and the psalmist, the wise man emphasized individual rather than national, ethical and religious teaching. Observations on the worthiness of well-doing predominate.

If one is looking for ethical teaching he will find maxims regarding a safe, peaceful, happy family and community life. Honesty, truthfulness, kindness and justice are urged. There is a worthy ideal of family life. A single wife who is industrious, frugal and devoted is called blessed. The virtues of courage, fortitude and self-sacrifice are not emphasized.

Righteousness consists in keeping the law. Conscience and duty seem to have no part. Common sense

taught that it was best for one to be good and do good. If one obeys the law and does what is right he will be happy. Proverbs is not concerned with what we call society's ethical claim on the individual. There seems to have been nothing in that time resembling international ethics.

The religious ideas of the writer of Proverbs are indicated in passages which show allegiance to one God who says, "I will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh," 1:26. Violation of the law constitutes sin. Salvation is deliverance from evil. If one obeys the law he is saved. Only the righteous may bring a sacrifice acceptable to God. One observes that the word "wisdom" as used in Proverbs seems to occupy the place of Jehovah.

Who gathered these proverbs and edited them we are not told. Doubtless Jesus was familiar with them. Proverbs have found their way into Christian teaching, such as:

"The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge;
But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction."
1:7.

"Train up a child in the way he should go,
And even when he is old he will not depart from it."
22:6.

"Commit thy works unto Jehovah,
And thy purposes shall be established."
16:3.

Job.—The greatest book of the Old Testament from a literary standpoint is Job. The opening and closing paragraphs are prose. The body of the book is a

lyric drama. It is a vivid presentation of the troubles of a man who feared God and avoided evil. He had a fine family and wealth in flocks and herds. It was his custom to offer sacrifices in behalf of his family even though he knew of no wrong committed by any of them.

Satan is represented as obtaining permission from God to tempt and try Job. The drama represents messengers coming to Job with the news that disaster has befallen his property. Later news comes of the destruction of Job's family. Finally Job is stricken with boils and has to leave his home and sit on an ash heap while he scrapes his running sores.

Friends come and sit on the ground near him to offer comfort and consolation. After seven days are passed in silence a dialogue or argument begins in which the friends accuse Job of committing sin for which he has not repented. Job retorts that this is not the case. The argument in which all of the friends take part and in which Job makes some eloquent replies offers to the modern reader a fair presentation of the philosophy of Job's time. It is setting forth the problem of human suffering. The earliest idea concerning suffering was that it was a punishment for wrongdoing. Job does not see how a just God can punish him for sins which he is not conscious of having committed. The voice of God is finally introduced in the drama challenging the listeners to observe his mighty works and to ponder upon his great wisdom. Job responds with the words, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth

Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," 42:5, 6. The drama closes with Job's restoration to health, family and prosperity.

Many scholars consider that Job may have been the name of a man who lived in Abraham's time and that certain stories had been repeated from generation to generation concerning him which possibly at a later period in Hebrew history became the basis of this greatest of religious dramas. We are given no hint as to the author of the book. Of course the reader will easily recognize that the book is named for the hero. For an appreciative understanding of the book one should read it from Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible" or "The New Translation of the Old Testament" by J. M. Powis Smith.

Summary of the Wisdom Literature.—In Ecclesiastes, Proverbs and Job we have been introduced to three kinds of wisdom literature. The connected preachments of Ecclesiastes stress the frailty of life and offer the query of whether or not life is really worth while. In Proverbs we found maxims emphasizing the foolishness of a sinful life, the worthiness of an honest and friendly life, the blessing of a righteous home, and the worthiness of a life directed by wisdom. The book of Job crowns the whole consideration of wisdom by revealing the will of God as the solution for all of man's perplexities.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How would you characterize the author of Ecclesiastes?
2. Indicate five ethical or religious teachings in Ecclesiastes.
3. What ideas of the political, social and religious conditions of the time can be gathered from the reading of Ecclesiastes?
4. Summarize the teachings of wisdom found in Proverbs 1:7-19; 1:20-33; 4 and 8.
5. Find five distinctively religious teachings in Proverbs.
6. Write a paragraph indicating the religious and social conditions as reflected in Proverbs.
7. What is the literary style of Job?
8. What is the author's objective?
9. How does he attain his purpose?
10. Are the statements of Job and his friends to be accepted as a divine revelation concerning sin, punishment, death and judgment?
11. Are the teachings of the book individual or national?
12. What observations do you make on the social and religious conditions of Job's time?

FOURTEENTH INQUIRY

WHAT MESSAGE HAS THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR MODERN TIMES?

We should not leave our study of the Old Testament without reviewing the approaches which we have made, recognizing the influences exerted by the various leaders, the meaning of the prophecies, and the contributions to Christianity made by the several kinds of literature.

The historical approach has led us in a consideration of the origin of human life and God's provision for it under widely varying circumstances. People called the children of God have been set apart geographically, socially and religiously. We have followed the history of these people from Abraham, the first Hebrew, to the last prophet and his Messianic message.

We have found a wide range of literature: simple narrative, songs of deliverance, psalms of praise, prayer and denunciation; maxims, advices and admonitions; lyric drama, acrostic poems and hymns of thanksgiving; vigorous denunciations and glorious settings of the coming Deliverer; stately pronouncements of law, searching sermons and statesmanlike deliverances of prophecy. Four kinds of literature of the Old Testament have carried their emphasis into the New Testament: the commandments, prophecy,

maxims of wisdom and the devotional riches of the Psalms.

One's powers of observation would indeed be dull if he did not gather from the books of the Old Testament a consciousness of a profoundly interesting social life. Whether tribes, slaves, wanderers, warriors, subjects, captives, worshipers or expectant agitators of a new age, their experiences reveal definite, pronounced and sometimes strenuous social problems.

However interesting the historical, literary and social approaches may have been, the religious is the most important of all. It is a part of our faith that the object of the Old Testament is to reveal the will of God to his chosen people. To the Christian student the Old Testament is the foundation of ethical and social as well as religious teaching. The Christian structure rises from this foundation. Commandments, regulations of services of worship, the principles of sacrifice, the recognition of sin and the need and promise of the Savior are all accepted from the Old Testament. We shall find that the teachings of Jesus are largely drawn from the riches of "The Law and the Prophets". Every New Testament speaker and writer is familiar with the Old Testament. Christian worship through twenty centuries has included Old Testament lessons and many sermons have been preached from characters and texts of the ancient Scriptures.

The message of the Old Testament for modern times is ethical, offering a very definite standard of right and wrong as given in the Ten Commandments. With

all the advancement of modern times, civilization has not outgrown the standard set in the Decalogue. The urge of the prophets to mercy, justice and righteousness is vital for today. Few people can express themselves devotionally better than with the use of the twenty-third Psalm. The Old Testament does not solve all of the problems offered in the complications of modern society, but it offers a great all-wise, all-powerful God with a message of his good will for those who choose to hear his voice and follow in his way. It furnishes a very fertile field for investigation of how people act when they are given certain definite standards of action, but are still selfish, wilful and sometimes rebellious. But we also have the picture of a forgiving God promising One who shall give a new outlook for life and lead his people to heights of religious experience and social achievement not yet attained. Let us carry with our thoughtful appreciation of the Old Testament the picture of dawn offered by Isaiah: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulders: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this."

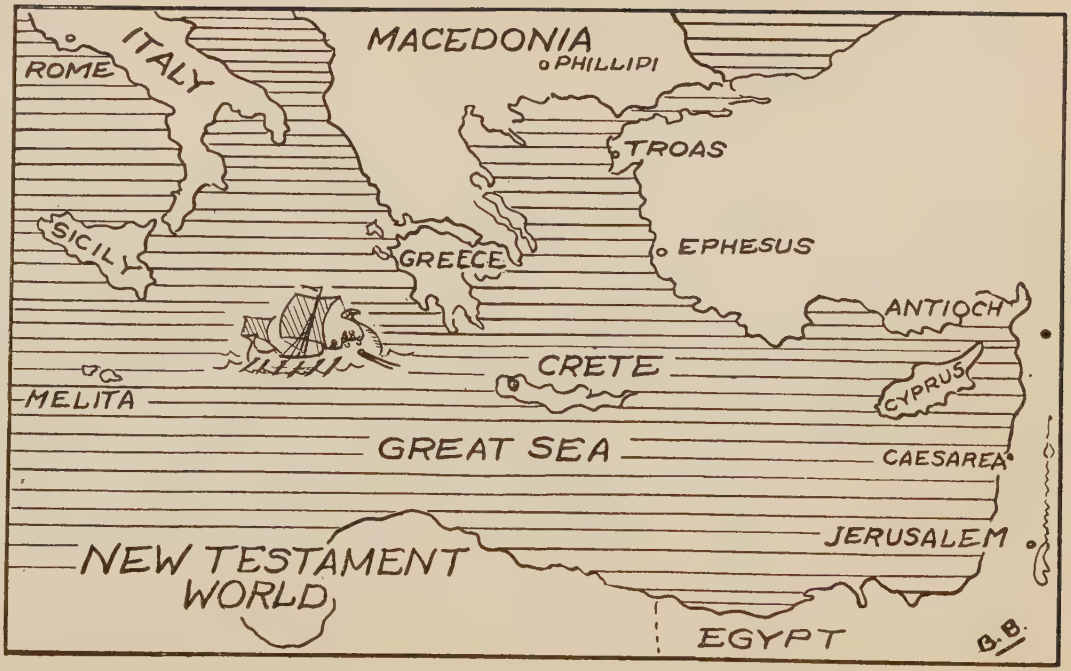
SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. What is the purpose of the Old Testament?
2. Tell how we got our Bible. When was the Authorized version printed?
3. What is meant by the "Canon of Scripture"?
4. What is meant by the inspiration of Scripture?
5. In what language was the O. T. originally written?
6. What period of world history does the O. T. cover?
7. Who was the first Hebrew and from what place did he come? Where did he settle?
8. Name five important incidents recorded in Genesis.
9. Name the main divisions of the O. T. in their order.
10. Name the books in each division.
11. What kinds of literature are found in the O. T.
12. Name five important characters mentioned in Genesis.
13. Divide the O. T. into historical periods and name a leader for each period.
14. How did the Hebrews come to be in Egypt and how did they fare there?
15. Who befriended them in Egypt and whose death caused a change of attitude?
16. What was the nature and use of the plagues?
17. Who was the leader of the Exodus? What preparation did he have?
18. What was the passover? What event was responsible for its origin?

19. From what place to what place did the people of the Exodus journey?
20. What important lessons were the Hebrews taught during the Exodus?
21. At what place were the commandments given and where are they recorded?
22. How long were the people on the journey from Egypt to Canaan? How were they fed?
23. What other instructions besides the Decalog were they given during the Exodus?
24. At what point did Moses give up his office to his successor? Who was his successor?
25. What were the duties of Moses' successor?
26. What difficulties did the people meet upon entering the promised land?
27. How were the people divided and organzied after entering the land?
28. What kind of government was first tried? Then what kind followed?
29. Who were Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca, Miriam, Naomi, Ruth, Esther, Deborah?
30. Name in their order Israel's three most noted kings and tell one important fact concerning each.
31. What caused the division of the kingdom? When did it occur?
32. What were the new kingdoms called? Who were the first kings?
33. How did they compare in area, population, strength, endurance, prosperity?
34. Name and characterize ten kings of this period.
35. Give date and cause of the fall of the Northern Kingdom.
36. When did Judah fall? Who was the conqueror?

37. Name five prophets who ministered to the people before the Exile.
38. What were the economic, social and religious conditions of the people during the Babylonian captivity?
39. Contrast the bondage in Egypt with the captivity.
40. What prophets ministered to the people during the captivity?
41. Under whose leadership did some of the people return to Jerusalem?
42. What conditions did they find upon returning to Jerusalem?
43. What important literary work was done during the captivity?
44. How did this work affect religious conditions after the return to Jerusalem?
45. What two kings are credited with having made literary contributions to the Old Testament?
46. Why is the study of Isaiah divided into two parts?
47. Name the two parts and indicate the differences to be observed.
48. What was the mission of the Hebrew prophet?
49. Give three evidences that the Bible is a divine revelation.
50. What is the secret of the Bible's power and influence?
51. What is the significance of the O. T. to Christianity?
52. Distinguish between religious and ethical or social teaching.
53. Name five great religious teachings of the O. T.
54. Name five great ethical teachings of the O. T.
55. What ideas formed the basis of Hebrew philosophy?
56. What are apocryphal books? Name some of them.
57. What is apocalyptical literature? Give instances.
58. What is meant by Messianic prophecy? Give instances.
59. Why may the prophets be called men of courage?

60. Discuss the literary style of Psalms.
61. Indicate a possible classification of Psalms.
62. Discuss the literary style and contents of Proverbs.
63. What problems are discussed in the book of Job?
64. Discuss the literary style of Job.
65. Compare the religious conceptions revealed in Job with the Christian faith.
66. Tell the story of Jonah. What lessons does it teach?
67. For what purpose and at what time was the book of Daniel probably written?
68. List ten important and readily usable passages from the O. T.
69. Review the importance of approaches to the study of the O. T.
70. Summarize the historical, literary, social and religious values of the O. T.


MACEDONIA
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SICILY
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EPHESUS
ANTIOCH
CRETE
CYPRUS
MELITA
GREAT SEA
CAESAREA
JERUSALEM
NEW TESTAMENT WORLD
EGYPT
B.B.

PART III

THE NEW TESTAMENT

FIFTEENTH INQUIRY

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?

There is a background with which we must become acquainted if we are to understand the New Testament. The study of the Old Testament revealed the importance of geographical, historical, literary and religious relationships. Our New Testament study will be guided by these approaches.

The Geographical Approach.—Thus far in our study of the Bible we have been concerned with lands to the east and south of the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The New Testament story begins in Old Testament Canaan which, in our New Testament study, we shall call Palestine. Although the land is the same, the political divisions are changed. Instead of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel we find the political divisions of Samaria, Judea and Galilee. Egypt, Arabia and Babylonia have slight mention in the New Testament. But a great and growing world reaches off to the northwest; Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Mace-

donia and Italy. Several islands of the Great Sea also command our attention. The government was that of the Roman Empire.

The Historical Approach.—What we call the Old Testament and what the Jews of Jesus' time referred to as the Scriptures forms the primary historical background for New Testament study. We must now inquire into the history of those two centuries just before the birth of Christ, which constitute the Intertestamental Period. Here are political, literary and religious movements of significance to the student of the New Testament.

Greek Influence.—The influence of the Greek language and culture, introduced by Alexander of Macedon (Macedonia), 332 B. C., encouraged and fostered by Antiochus the Great, King of Syria, 198 B. C., and followed by the ruthless domination of Antiochus Epiphanes, 175 B. C., turned the minds of many Jews from the worship of Jehovah, as indicated by the history recorded in the Maccabees: "He (Jason) eagerly established a Greek place of exercise under the citadel itself; and caused the nobles of the young men to wear a Greek cap. And thus there was an extreme of Greek fashions, and an advance of alien religion, by reason of the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly man and no high priest; so that the priests had no more any zeal for the service of the altar: but despising the sanctuary, and neglecting the sacrifices, they hastened to enjoy that which was unlawfully provided in the palaestra, after the summons of the discus; making of no account the honors of their

fathers, and thinking the glories of the Greeks best of all." (2 Maccabees 4:12-15.)

Jewish Fortitude.—There were devout Jews who stood valiantly for the faith of their fathers and who resented the aggression of Antiochus who profaned the temple, 168 B. C., by having an altar built to Zeus and swine's flesh sacrificed upon it. He prohibited circumcision, sacrifices to Jehovah and Sabbath observance. What probably hurt the Jews most of all was being deprived of the books of the Law, their Bible. Many Jews were killed because they refused to sacrifice to pagan gods. A remarkable revolt was led by Judas Maccabeus which resulted, 165 B. C., in religious independence, the restoration of the temple and Jewish religious rites. The restored temple was rededicated December 25, 165 B. C. The annual holiday of this event was called the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22).

The Scribes.—The training of Jewish youth required teachers of the Law. The Scribes studied the Law diligently and prepared regulations concerning its observance. Just what constituted a Sabbath day's journey and what work might lawfully be done on the Sabbath, are instances in point. At the synagogue the Law and its regulations were taught orally. Pupils were required to memorize the exact language. Originality, so eagerly sought by modern teachers and pupils, was absolutely discouraged and prohibited. The Scribes, also called Rabbi, were closely associated with the Pharisees.

The Pharisees.—Political independence from Syria was obtained under the leadership of Simon, 143 B. C. There followed a period of great material prosperity which threatened the religious life of Israel. Cooperating with the Scribes in this crisis were the Pharisees. They contended for the strict observance of the law, a worthy motive, but with an emphasis which soon led to petty regulations concerning the Sabbath, fasts and washings, later condemned by Jesus as worthless traditions. We must keep in mind when we study the teachings of Jesus that he never spoke against the Law but criticized the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who made such exacting requirements concerning the application of the Law and then evaded their own rules. Jesus raised no objections to their main doctrines of immortality, the resurrection of the body and of the coming of the Messiah. He did observe their pride as indicated in his reference to the two men who went to the temple to pray, one of whom was a Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14).

The Sadducees.—There was a smaller party, more political than religious, called Sadducees. The priests and the wealthy were of this party. They favored the Greek influence and with the exception of denying the resurrection, were little concerned with the religious discussions carried on by the Scribes and Pharisees.

The Zealots.—Those who rebelled most vehemently against Roman dominance in Palestine were called Zealots. They stood for armed opposition. Jesus was not in sympathy with them for the kingdom for which

he stood was not to be established by force. Historians charge the Zealots with responsibility for instigating the rebellion against Titus, which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A. D.

The Essenes.—In contrast to the active Zealots were the retiring Essenes. These men refrained from marriage and devoted themselves to quiet study and meditation. Colonies were formed in the lower valleys of the Judean hills, northwest of the Dead Sea, where they shared equally their needs and provisions. They practised temperance and self-denial and opposed war and slavery. The Essenes sought to express their religious purpose and consecration in honest labor, purity of life and conscious communion with God.

The Common People.—We must not conclude that the groups just described constituted the population of Palestine. The shepherds, fishermen, gardeners, orchardists, vine dressers, farmers, shop-keepers and traveling merchants, with their families and helpers, composed the great population from whom came the multitudes who heard Jesus gladly.

The Greek Language.—The great influence of the Greek language during this period and on through the first century of the Christian era must not be overlooked. It was used to such an extent that by 200 B. C. the Old Testament books had been translated into Greek. Doubtless Greek was the original language of all the New Testament books. Greek is a much richer and more beautiful language than Hebrew or Aramaic, the language in common use in Jesus' time.

Roman Dominance.—Next we see Roman power lay hold on Palestine. Pompey took possession of Jerusalem, 63 B. C., and Rome was collecting taxes from the Jews when Jesus was born. Herod, at Rome 39 B. C., was appointed king of Judea and held office until Jesus was two years old. He built a marvelous temple at Jerusalem and did other things to win and hold the loyalty of his subjects. His reign was a period of peace in Palestine in which all who cared to had opportunity to study and observe their religion.

Apocryphal Books.—Certain religious books of this period not included in the Hebrew Scriptures and, therefore, not in the Bible used by Protestants are called Apocryphal. Most important among these are Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith and the Book of Wisdom. The Maccabees record very important historical matter. These books may be read in a Roman Catholic Bible as well as in some editions of the Authorized version. The Apocrypha is published also in a volume independent of the Bible.

The Messianic Expectation.—The Jews were expecting a militant Messiah who would assume the kingship and be the victorious deliverer of his people. They had comforted themselves in times of persecution with the hope of a better day in which Jerusalem would be free from all oppressing powers. These thoughts occupied the minds of the Jews when Jesus was born at Bethlehem.

The Date of the Birth of Jesus Christ.—One would naturally suppose that the Christian era began with the year one of our Lord, but that is not the case.

When the Christian calendar was adopted, March, 1582, the dates of events prior to the birth of Christ were designated "Before Christ". Likewise, dates of later events were written "Anno Domini", the year of our Lord. In time historians discovered that the original date had been set too late. Instead of changing the entire calendar, the date of Jesus' birth was recorded as 4 B. C. Within the present century, scholars in the realm of historical research have found that this date was too late, and many of them have settled upon the years for the earthly life of Jesus as 6 B. C. to 29 A. D. These dates are used in presenting the chronology of the New Testament in this book.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is meant by the background of the New Testament?
2. Indicate on a map the New Testament world and compare it with that of the Old Testament.
3. What items must be considered in the historical approach?
4. Who were the chief parties among the Jews and for what did they stand?
5. What is meant by the Messianic expectation?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the contributions made by Hebrews, Greeks and Romans to the establishment and advancement of Christianity.
2. Visualize life in Palestine at the time of Jesus' youth.
3. Consider the value of the Apocryphal books.

SIXTEENTH INQUIRY

HOW DID WE GET OUR NEW TESTAMENT?

The Literary Approach.—Jesus did not begin his ministry by introducing a book. Instead of a book making a teacher, the life and work of the Teacher called into being a great book. The literary approach to the study of the New Testament involves the origin and translation of 27 books which constitute the canon. Thirteen of these books, containing about one-third of the chapters of the New Testament, were written by Paul. These doubtless were the first Christian writings accepted by the Church. Four Gospels and the book of Acts offer important biographical and historical matter without which we would be unable to understand the writings of Paul. These and other books will be considered in detail as we proceed with our study. We now turn to a brief review of how the records came into being, and of the translations through which they passed before coming into modern Christian hands. The student may turn to the Third Inquiry, "How did the Bible come into being?", to refresh his mind upon the matters of inspiration, and methods of writing, which apply to the New Testament as well as to the Old. There is also found the tracing of translations, including the present English versions.

Manuscripts.—We pause here for a closer scrutiny of the manuscripts and codices by which the books of the New Testament were preserved and transmitted until the days of printing. There are some very early copies of the books of the New Testament, sometimes called manuscripts because they are hand-written, but no original manuscripts of the New Testament are known to be now extant. The manuscript rooms in the great libraries, like the British Museum in London, contain very important records of all the parts of the New Testament. There are hundreds of these records, some of which have been made with great care, artistically decorated and highly colored. Red, blue and gold were the popular colors for this work. We shall give brief consideration to the three earliest, most reliable and, therefore, most important Greek manuscripts of the Bible.

Codex Vaticanus, so named because it is the property of the Vatican Library at Rome, was written possibly during the fourth century of the Christian era and originally contained the entire Bible. Now it lacks most of Genesis, the Pastoral Epistles and the Apocalypse. This valuable codex was hand-written in Greek on seven hundred leaves of fine vellum. The pages are twelve inches square and there are three columns to a page. Uncials, that is, each letter standing alone as in print rather than connected as in writing, were used. The manuscript is written without paragraph divisions or punctuation. For many years this manuscript was kept out of the reach of scholars but the intense interest in Bible study has brought it

to the light and photographed copies of it are the property of some of the largest theological libraries.

Codex Sinaiticus is in the library at Leningrad. This important manuscript was discovered in 1844 by Dr. Constantine Tischendorf of Leipsig in the monastery of St. Catherine, at the base of Mt. Sinai. Scholars consider that it, like the Vatican manuscript, was written in the fourth century and includes the entire New Testament as well as the Apocryphal books of the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas. Dr. Tischendorf fortunately rescued this important codex from the flames for he found the monks feeding it sheet by sheet into a fire in the corridor of the monastery. They thought it of no value until he wanted it; then they considered it so very valuable that they would not let him have it. He sought for a number of years to obtain it and finally in 1859 succeeded in persuading the monks to send it as a gift to the Czar at St. Petersburg who was the head of the Greek Orthodox Church. Having gained possession of what he considered the most valuable manuscript which he had seen, Dr. Tischendorf hastened to Egypt. Before leaving Cairo he and his assistants made an exact copy of the codex. Later, at Leipsig, and again at St. Petersburg, the manuscript was printed, copies of which are in the more complete libraries of the world. It was written in capitals, four columns to the page, and without divisions or punctuation.

Codex Alexandrinus, which is in the manuscript room of the British Museum in London, was found at Alexandria, Egypt, and was presented to King Charles

I of England by the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1628 A. D. This valuable codex contains the entire Bible and the Epistles of St. Clement of Rome. It is written in double columns on fine vellum and is classified as a product of the middle of the fifth century. Although the ink is faded to a dull brown, the writing is still clear and of great value to scholars of the Greek New Testament. None of these important records of the Bible was available when the Authorized, or King James version, was made in 1611, but all were used in preparing the revised versions of 1881 and 1901.

Order of the Books.—Our detailed study of the New Testament will follow, in general, the order in which the books are printed. They were arranged so far as possible in the order of events recorded by them, but a literary approach to an understanding of the New Testament leads us to a consideration of the books in the order in which they were produced. We, therefore, present a brief review of the books as they appear to have been written.

Order of Writing.—As indicated above the first of the New Testament books to be written were those of Paul. Several of these were written to meet particular situations in places which he had visited in his missionary journeys. It is probable that they appeared in the following order: I and II Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans. The following are thought to have been written while Paul was a prisoner, either at Caesarea or Rome: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, I and II Timothy and Titus. Possibly the next epistles produced were James,

Jude, I and II Peter—although the last named may be later than all of the other books of the New Testament. Then the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke came into being, giving the threefold record of important events and teachings in the life of Jesus. Acts, recording some of the more important movements of the early Christians, naturally follows. Hebrews, Revelation, the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of John were written during the late years of the first Christian century.

Memory Before Writing.—There is no evidence today that any part of what is now our New Testament was recorded during the ministry of Jesus. What we have of his teachings must have been impressed upon the memories of some of his hearers so that they were told to others. A generation later they made a very important part of the written record. Many scholars believe that parts of the Gospel of Matthew were early records called Logia (words) of Matthew, and that the Gospel was called Matthew's because these Logia were used.

Summary.—The steps leading to a modern New Testament are:

First, a great life, with challenging teachings;

Second, the service of memory by which the accounts of facts and teachings were preserved;

Third, early writing in Greek;

Fourth, copies of the early records, still in Greek and done by hand;

Fifth, translations into Latin and English;

Sixth, the service of printing;
Seventh, revisions and recent translations.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What items must be considered in the literary approach to the New Testament?
2. Name three important codices of the New Testament and tell where each one is kept.
3. Compare the order of the production of the books of the New Testament with the order in which they are now printed.
4. Name the books of the New Testament written by the Apostle Paul.
5. Trace the steps through which a saying of Jesus, like the Lord's Prayer, passed in getting to us today in the English language.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Review the Third Inquiry for the steps in translation leading to our present English versions.
2. Look up and tell the story of Dr. Tischendorf and the finding of Codex Sinaiticus.
3. What advantages did the translators of the American Standard revised version have over those of the Authorized version?

VIRGINS
FOUNTAIN
NAZARETH
BOB BOARDMAN

SEVENTEENTH INQUIRY

WHAT RECORDS HAVE WE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS?

The Synoptic Gospels.—Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the "Synoptic" Gospels, because each of them gives a synopsis or resumé of the life and ministry of Jesus. Although each record may be independent of the other two, in selection and arrangement of material, there is a marked similarity in the accounts, and in several instances the language is identical. By putting passages from Matthew, Mark and Luke side by side, and by carefully arranging them, a story of the life of Jesus may be formed. When such a thing is done, the product is called a "harmony" of the Gospels. Several such harmonies may be had in printed form, the use of which is very helpful to the student of the life of Jesus. We shall now take up the study of these three Gospels in the order in which they may have been produced.

Mark, the Earliest Gospel.—The Gospel by Mark was probably written at Rome, about 67 A. D. It is thought that the writer obtained considerable information from Peter. It is the shortest and most simple of the Gospel records. Scholars consider that it gives a reliable order of events. Mark records instances

rather than long conversations or sermons. He wrote primarily for Gentile readers.

A Gospel for Jews, Matthew.—The Gospel recorded by Matthew was probably written by 75 A. D., in or near Jerusalem. It is distinctly Jewish in object and expression. Matthew gives the geneology of Jesus and the account of his infancy, which are omitted by Mark. His arrangement of material seems to be topical, rather than chronological. This is noticed by comparing the records of the Sermon on the Mount, in chapters 5, 6 and 7, with the way in which the same expressions are scattered through Mark and Luke. Matthew groups the parables and miracles more closely than do the other Gospel writers. His object was to convince Jewish readers that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah. He closes the record with the words of Jesus to his disciples: "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

The Most Beautiful Gospel was recorded by Luke, probably at Rome, about 80 A. D. The author notes in his introduction that several have made records of the life of Jesus and, that as he had an intimate acquaintance with all these matters, he thought it well that he, too, should make a record. He offers the information which he has to give to one named Theophilus. This name means "lover of God" and may

refer to some person by that name, or the term may have been used in place of a proper name. Luke's Gospel shows that he had full information concerning the events prior to and including the birth and infancy of Jesus. He shows a fine appreciation of the religious faith of several persons mentioned in this connection. His Gospel exalts motherhood and childhood. He arranged his material chronologically rather than by topics, and gives no long discourses. His is the longest of the synoptic Gospels and records several events not found in the other two. It appears to have been written for Gentile readers, although it offers no difficulties to Jewish Christians.

Summary of the Synoptic Gospels.—If the student has read these Gospels with care, and especially if he has studied a harmony, he may have observed that nearly all of the record of Mark is found also in Matthew and Luke. About half of the material of Matthew is recorded, in almost the identical language, but different arrangement, in Luke. Moreover, the student should not overlook the fact that the remaining parts of Matthew and Luke furnish valuable information not otherwise given.

Scholars quite generally agree that both Matthew and Luke had the record of Mark before them as they wrote. They considered it no offense to have used the same wording that they found in Mark's record and they felt free to follow their own inclinations relative to the selection and arrangement of materials. One should study these Gospels as a whole, tracing the steps in the life of Jesus, and observing the revelation

of his message as it is presented in events, conversations and sermons.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How were the accounts of Jesus' ministry preserved before the Gospels were written?
2. Why are Matthew, Mark and Luke called Synoptic Gospels?
3. How do these Gospels differ and in what ways are they alike?
4. What was the subject of Jesus' teaching?
5. Where are the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer recorded?
6. What does Luke say was his purpose in writing the third Gospel?
7. Which Gospel gives the fullest account of the birth and early life of Jesus?
8. Name the twelve disciples in the order in which they were chosen.
9. Name ten important events in the life of Jesus before the Triumphal Entry.
10. Name ten important events between the Triumphal Entry and the Ascension of Jesus.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5, 6, 7, with the accounts in Mark and Luke.
2. Evaluate the work of John the Baptist.
3. Discuss the use which Jesus made of parables and miracles.
4. Discuss the value to Jesus and his disciples of the Transfiguration.
5. Why did Jesus not force belief in himself by appearing to unbelievers after his resurrection?

EIGHTEENTH INQUIRY

WHAT IS THE MESSAGE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL?

A Spiritual Gospel.—The careful reader observes many differences between the synoptic Gospels and the one recorded by John. Here there is no record of the geneology, birth or infancy of Jesus. He is presented as the Son of God, the revelation of God. It is said of John that he had opportunity to read the several records of Jesus' life which had been written, that he pronounced them good, and then, 96-100 A. D., wrote what was largely omitted in the other Gospels. His emphasis is distinctly spiritual. He presents some very rich messages, from the Master, not given elsewhere. It has been said that all of the events in the life of Jesus which John records could have taken place within three weeks' time. Fully half of his record is devoted to Passion week.

Treasured Chapters.—The Gospel of John is the richest devotional reading of the New Testament. The third chapter includes the greatest single sentence of the Gospels: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." The close fellowship which Jesus desired that his followers should have with him is illustrated in the beautiful

allegory of the vine and the branches, recorded in the fifteenth chapter. Here the Father is the husbandman, or caretaker of the vine, and of the branches which bear the fruit. The Master knew that his departure from the earthly life would be discouraging to his disciples and, therefore, gave them his rich promise of comfort recorded by John in the fourteenth chapter. The greatest prayer recorded in the Bible is unquestionably that of the Master for his disciples, as John has given it to us in the seventeenth chapter. Only one who entered deeply into the experience in the Garden of Gethsemane could have recorded so fully such a remarkable prayer. The model prayer given in connection with the Sermon on the Mount has been called by the Church the "Lord's Prayer", and doubtless appropriately so, but we need some such designation for this yearning of the Master's heart as recorded in John 17. The tender but firm way in which Jesus dealt with Peter after his resurrection must have been deeply appreciated by the disciple whom Jesus loved, to have made possible the record in chapter 21:15-23.

Some have thought that the author of this book could not have been John, the Beloved Disciple, and have suggested John, the Presbyter, who lived at Ephesus the latter part of the first Christian century. If John was not the actual writer of the Gospel as we have it, he must have furnished the material which was recorded by a younger disciple by the name of John. In this case, as in the authorship of other books of the Bible, we are less concerned with the name of the author than with his message. All scholars, re-

gardless of their convictions concerning the authorship of the fourth Gospel, agree in giving it a high place in the treasuries of Christian literature.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why is the Gospel of John called a spiritual Gospel?
2. What was the author's purpose in writing this Gospel? John 20:31.
3. Paraphrase John 1:1-18.
4. What was the purpose of the coming of Christ as stated in John 10?
5. Upon what new commandment was the ethical character of discipleship to be based? John 13:34, 35, 15:12.
6. What is the significance of "eternal life" as defined in John 17:3?
7. Analyze the prayer of Jesus in John 17.
8. Summarize what Jesus said at the Last Supper.
9. Paraphrase chapter fourteen.
10. Summarize the truth presented by Jesus in John 15, 16.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare John's Gospel with the synoptic Gospels in purpose, spirit, method of treatment, content and time of writing.
2. Summarize the main events and teachings of John 1-10.
3. Compare the events of John 11-21 with the accounts of this period in the synoptic Gospels.

NINETEENTH INQUIRY

HOW MAY ONE SUMMARIZE THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS?

The four Gospels give us a literary approach to the life and ministry of Jesus. Our next task is to organize the facts into a summary which shall give unity and definiteness to our knowledge.

Birth and Childhood.—We all are familiar with the fact that while Joseph and Mary lived at Nazareth in Galilee, they made a journey to Bethlehem, six miles south of Jerusalem, where Jesus was born. Responding to divine direction, to avoid the cruelty of Herod, who sought the young child's life, Joseph and Mary took the boy Jesus to Egypt. The traveler in Cairo today is shown an old Coptic church, covering what is said to be the stone house in which Joseph, Mary and Jesus lived during those years of protection in Egypt.

Nazareth.—After the death of Herod, the family returned to Nazareth, where "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men." (Luke 2:52.) Roman Catholic churches are built over the reputed house and carpenter shop of Joseph. The reservoir which furnishes water for the city is called "Mary's Fountain" and "The Fountain of the Virgin". Nazareth is beautifully situated between high hills

midway between Mt. Carmel and the Sea of Galilee. The highest hill which rises to the west of Nazareth afforded Jesus, a normally growing youth, a marvelous view. Across the fertile plain of Esdraelon to the west are Mt. Carmel and the Great Sea. To the north, the Lebanons stretch away to the horizon. Mt. Hermon, the highest peak of the Anti-Lebanon, is a little to the right. Damascus was in the distance to the northeast, out of sight, but surely not out of mind. Between Nazareth and Damascus just at the foot of the hills lay the plain and lake of Gennesaret. To the southeast, Mt. Tabor rose, round and high, surrounded by the plain of Jezreel. The mountains of Samaria stretched away to the south. Can one fail to see a vigorous youth catching the inspiration of this scene as his mind was reaching toward the task that lay before him, that of helping his people to know their God?

Friends of Toil.—As Jesus worked with Joseph in the carpenter shop, he must have learned many practical lessons and formed substantial friendships with the youths and men of Nazareth. Is there any good reason for thinking that he failed to go with companions on fishing trips to Gennesaret, where he may have become acquainted with some of the very men who were later called to be his disciples? The simple life of the home and the agriculture of the valleys, the vines on the terraces, and the sheep on the hillsides were all familiar to him. A thoughtful study of the parables reveals what good use Jesus made of this information obtained in his youth.

Preparation for His Ministry.—We must consider that the years at Nazareth made a large contribution to Jesus' preparation for his ministry. Joseph and Mary did not fail to give their son of promise the parental training of the Jewish religion. He doubtless was a regular pupil and worshiper at the synagogue and we are told in the Gospels of at least one important visit to the temple in Jerusalem. There, at the age of twelve, he startled the scholars of the temple with his knowledge and interpretation of the Scriptures. If, as is commonly supposed, he left Nazareth for his public ministry at the age of thirty, he had had a number of years for mature thinking, and doubtless many opportunities for friendly discussion, regarding the questions of the day.

Baptism and Meditation.—Having heard that John, a vigorous preacher of repentance, was baptizing at the Jordan, Jesus went to hear him and asked for baptism. The Gospel record is that a voice from heaven proclaimed, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11.) How long he may have stayed in the company of those who were listening to John's preaching, we are not told, but soon he was directed by the Spirit to the wilderness hills of Judea where for forty days he fasted, and meditated upon his prospective ministry. Should he allow himself to become the Messiah expected by the Jews, and assume military leadership as a king? Should he make his ministry spectacular? How could he best relate his ministry to that of John the Baptist? Would people be convinced that God was speaking through him?

Could he, by gathering a few humble men about him, travel through the country and teach the people the nature and will of God? Judging from the record of his ministry such questions must have occupied his mind.

Temptation and Victory.—The Gospel accounts say that at the close of these days of meditation and fasting, he became conscious of hunger and that the devil appealed to him to turn stones to bread. There he fought the temptations common to man, ascribed in the Gospels to the devil. He would not use his divine power and authority for his own satisfaction. Hear his reply, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4.) The further suggestion that he make a spectacular appearance and accept the glory of worldly kingdoms is met with the words: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," (Matthew 4:10.) Crowning this victory the record says, "Angels came and ministered unto him." (Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:13.)

His Public Ministry.—We are indebted to the fourth Gospel for an account of the way in which Jesus began his ministry. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world". John had seen the Spirit descending upon Jesus and he was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. John turned the attention of two of his own followers, Andrew and John, to Jesus as the Lamb of God and they followed him. Andrew found his brother

Simon and brought him to Jesus. Philip and Nathaniel joined the group.

His Ministry in Galilee.—Jesus then turned again to his own province of Galilee, where he called several others to his fellowship. The first miracle of which we have a record was that of turning the water to wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. According to the synoptic Gospels the majority of Jesus' time was spent in Galilee, although we have record of at least a slight extension of his ministry into Samaria, Phenicia, the region of Caesaria Philippi, Decapolis, and Perea, with occasional visits and the events of the last week of his life in Judea. There were few Scribes and Pharisees and no temple priests in Galilee.

Multitudes Follow.—Jesus was well acquainted with the thoughts of the common people about him and it was among them that he found those who constituted the inner circle of companions called the disciples. As Galilee was thickly populated, it was an easy matter for large groups of people to gather as soon as they heard that Jesus was in their vicinity. Crowds followed him from place to place and there were times when so many people thronged about him that he felt the necessity of withdrawing with his disciples to a mountain for close fellowship and prayer. Here he interpreted the Scriptures and talked over with them the social and religious problems which crowded upon their minds.

His Generous Service.—To the needy multitudes he gave freely of his knowledge and strength. Many times he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, strength to

the infirm, and sometimes increased food to meet the needs of great numbers. His miracles were the response of his great pitying heart to the sad human need all about him. Every aching body tugged at the heart of Christ. We are convinced that important as was his ministry to the body, Jesus' greater concern was for the social and spiritual welfare of his people. He yearned, as Paul said later concerning his own ministry, "to impart unto them some spiritual gift" and to reveal to them the fatherly nature of God. Jesus believed the Law and the prophets, and wanted his people to catch the larger meaning of these inspired Scriptures.

The Sermon on the Mount.—To the northwest of the Sea of Galilee, just above the plain called Gennesaret, is the Mount of Beatitudes, the traditional site of the giving of the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's record in chapters 5, 6 and 7 gives us the best organized material for the study of the ethical and social teachings of Jesus, the essence of that which Jesus called the Kingdom of God. At the close of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew says, "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teachings: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." (Matthew 7:28, 29.) Jesus used many parables, examples, allegories and incidents to illustrate what he meant by this expression, "Kingdom of God". He was giving his life daily that people might understand its purpose and content.

Jesus in the Synagogues.—At Nazareth the old synagogue where Jesus taught is covered by a church. Here he read to his own people from the prophecy of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord," and said to them, "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:18, 19, 21.) The ruins of a synagogue at Capernaum at the north end of the Sea of Galilee are shown today as a place where Jesus quoted from Isaiah, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death to them did light spring up." (Matthew 4:15.)

Looking Toward Jerusalem.—The time came when it was necessary for him to reveal to his disciples his solemn conviction that he must go to Jerusalem, be falsely accused, and crucified. His visit to a high mountain apart with a few of his disciples before whom he was transfigured seems to be in the nature of preparation for the experience that he and they were approaching.

Events at Jerusalem.—The triumphal entry in which the common people hailed the coming of the one whom they would crown "King of the Jews" introduced a week of conflict. Cleansing the temple, the challenging of Jesus' authority, and the determination of the officials to do away with him are events which occurred in rapid succession. Jesus was confronted with

the necessity of preparing his disciples to meet a strange and trying experience.

The Upper Room.—In the southwest corner of Jerusalem is an Armenian church which shelters what is said to be the upper room in which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. Here, by washing their feet, he gave them an example of humility, and indicated to them that the taking of food and drink in Christian fellowship should be to them, and their companions in the future, a sacred reminder of his broken body and shed blood as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. He told them that they would undergo severe temptation but assured them that the comfort of God would meet their need.

Gethsemane.—He asked them to accompany him to a place of prayer across the narrow valley east of the temple. There, among the olive trees of Gethsemane he waited in prayer for the officers who came to arrest him. He was brought back forcibly, although he offered no resistance, to Jerusalem where a pretense of a trial was held and he was condemned to be crucified. Bearing his cross and followed by a jeering mob, but accompanied also by some who still believed in him, he traveled the narrow Jerusalem street now called Via Doloroso, through the Damascus gate, to the hill called Golgotha outside the city wall. There he was crucified. His body was laid in a tomb cut out of the rocky hillside near to the place of the cross.

"He is Risen."—On the third day he rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples upon several occasions. He gave them instructions regarding the work

that they were to do, and from the crown of the Mount of Olives about a mile east of the temple, he bade his disciples farewell and ascended to heaven.

The Disciples Become Apostles.—Before leaving his disciples Jesus gave them a twofold commission. One was that they should tarry in Jerusalem until they were imbued with power from on high. The other was to go into all the world and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

No Organized Church.—We have no evidence that he had established an organization such as the church, nor provided doctrinal statements nor plans of government for such an institution. All of this was left to a small group of men—loyally supported by faithful, holy women—who had been disciples. These recent learners and followers were now apostles, heralds, messengers. Because of their fellowship with the Master we shall see in the following chapter how sincerely they assumed their responsibility, how earnestly they met the challenges of changed conditions, and how faithfully they carried out their commission. They were of advanced experience.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Name the important events in the life of Jesus previous to his baptism.
2. What preparation did Jesus have for his ministry?
3. What was the significance of Jesus' baptism? Of his ministry?

4. In what part of Palestine did Jesus spend most of his ministry?
5. Name in their order the chief events of Passion week.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Enumerate the points of emphasis in Jesus' ministry.
2. Name the twelve disciples.
3. What is involved in the disciples becoming apostles?

ST. STEPHENS
GATE,
JERUSALEM.
Bob Boardman

TWENTIETH INQUIRY

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS?

Some Acts of Some of the Apostles.—The author of the third Gospel doubtless wrote the book of Acts. Luke, who so vividly tells the story of the life of Jesus, was the physician friend of Paul and his companions. He had accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys and knew the facts, which he felt called of God to record. We think of this history as having been written very soon after the writing of the Gospel of Luke. Both messages were addressed to the same person, Theophilus. This name means lover of God. Some have thought that this was not the actual name of the one addressed but that it was used in place of the real name to avoid the possibility of bringing persecution from Jews or Romans upon some person whom Luke considered worthy of receiving the recorded information which he was sending to him. Both books may have been written at Rome about 80-85 A. D.

Two Dominant Characters.—The reader of the book of Acts will easily observe that the first part has to do with the events in or near Jerusalem. The people most concerned were Jews who had become followers of the Gospel. The leading character of the first part of Acts is Peter, while Paul dominates the latter part

of the record. Both of these men had visions which convinced them that God intended that the Gospel should be offered to Gentiles as well as to Jews. However, both Peter and Paul considered it their duty to offer the Gospel to the Jews first. This outstanding historical book of the New Testament, in twenty-eight chapters, gives the main facts which the Church has concerning the beginnings of Christianity. The movement began at Jerusalem but within a half century it had reached Rome. The north coast of Africa and the islands of the Great Sea had also received missionaries.

Interest and Devotion.—Acts opens with a brief review of the events following the resurrection. Jesus had urged his followers to stay in Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Spirit. In the power of the Holy Spirit they were to be witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth". (1:8.) They waited in prayer and fellowship and their faith was rewarded. Peter seems to have understood what happened better than any of his companions. He saw in the events the fulfillment of prophecy and explained it to those who would hear him. The number of believers increased to 5,000 (4:4). Some of the apostles were imprisoned for telling the story of Jesus, but they considered it their duty to "obey God rather than men" (5:29), and so they continued preaching in spite of persecution. The believers shared food and responsibilities with one another and appointed worthy men to see that needy persons were cared for. "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the

Holy Spirit, full of grace and power" (6:5, 8), was one of these humble servants. However, he spoke so wisely and did such wonders that he was considered, by some of the enemies of the Gospel, to be a dangerous person and he was brought before the high priest for examination. The seventh chapter records his courageous defense, his challenge to the sincerity of his accusers, and his prayer, as he was being stoned to death, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

A severe persecution of the disciples of Jesus at Jerusalem caused them to flee in many directions. Thus the Gospel story was carried to distant villages and provinces. Peter received a vision which resulted in his going to Caesarea where he offered the Gospel to Gentiles. Saul started for Damascus to persecute "the disciples of the Lord", but on the way was converted and later returned to testify that he too was a follower of Christ. He joined Barnabas in preaching the Gospel at Antioch in Syria, where the disciples were first called Christians, that is, followers of Christ. The slaying of James and the imprisonment of Peter by the order of Herod, Peter's escape from prison while the disciples were in prayer in his behalf, his flight to Caesarea, Tyre and Sidon, the strange death of Herod, and the return to Antioch of Barnabas and Saul are very important events recorded in the twelfth chapter.

Missionary Paul.—As Jerusalem was the scene of the anointing with power of the first apostles, Antioch became the second great center of missionary effort. Acts 13-28 record the story of the missionary journeys

of Barnabas, Saul—from now on called Paul—and of their associates, John, Mark and Silas. Paul's speech on Mars Hill at Athens (17:22-31), his defenses at Jerusalem (22:1-21, 23:1-10), before Governor Felix (24:10-25), before Festus (25:8-12), and before King Agrippa (26:1-29) at Caesarea, all show the mind of a master in the selection and use of material for explanation and defense.

Paul's Journeys.—That part of Paul's life which we know best is concerned with his four journeys. Three of these were planned by Paul and were for the purpose of interesting Jews and Gentiles in the Gospel, establishing churches and encouraging Christians in their faith. The pursuit of this mission took Paul to the Isle of Cyprus and to the principal cities of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece. On the fourth journey the great missionary was a prisoner bound for trial before Caesar at Rome, the capital of the Empire. The account in Acts shows that even under these circumstances Paul was able to do considerable missionary work. Very significant are the closing words of the book of Acts: "And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him."

Abrupt Close of Acts.—The reader will not fail to observe that the book of Acts closes abruptly. There is no summary of the extent of Christianity and no account of Paul's trial. The duration of his imprisonment is not given, nor the nature and date of his death.

Two theories concerning what became of Paul have been advanced by scholars. The first is that he was released and that this liberty gave him opportunity for carrying out his ambition to visit Spain in the interest of the Gospel. We have no record that this was done, but many have accommodated themselves to this way of thinking. The other theory is that Paul's imprisonment at Rome was short and that he was executed in or near Rome, under Nero, 61 or 64 A. D.

The general trend of the book indicates that the author considered that the Roman Government was their protector during the missionary journeys. While the emperor later was responsible for the persecution of Christians, Luke appears to want his account to indicate that the Roman officials heroically protected Paul and his companions against the enmity of the Jews. The narrative in this historical book of Acts furnishes the foundation for our interpretation of the letters of Paul.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Who was the author of Acts and what was his purpose in writing?
2. Who was the outstanding figure in the first part of Acts?
3. What city is the center of activities during this time?
4. Who is the chief person and what city is the center of Christian activities during the second part of Acts?
5. What was the significance of Pentecost?
6. What were the causes and results of the martyrdom of Stephen?

7. What new conception of the mission of the Gospel did Peter receive? Acts 10:9-11:18.
8. How was Paul's early training helpful to him after his conversion?
9. Why were the Judaizers opposed to Paul?
10. Trace the events of Paul's life following his last journey to Jerusalem.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

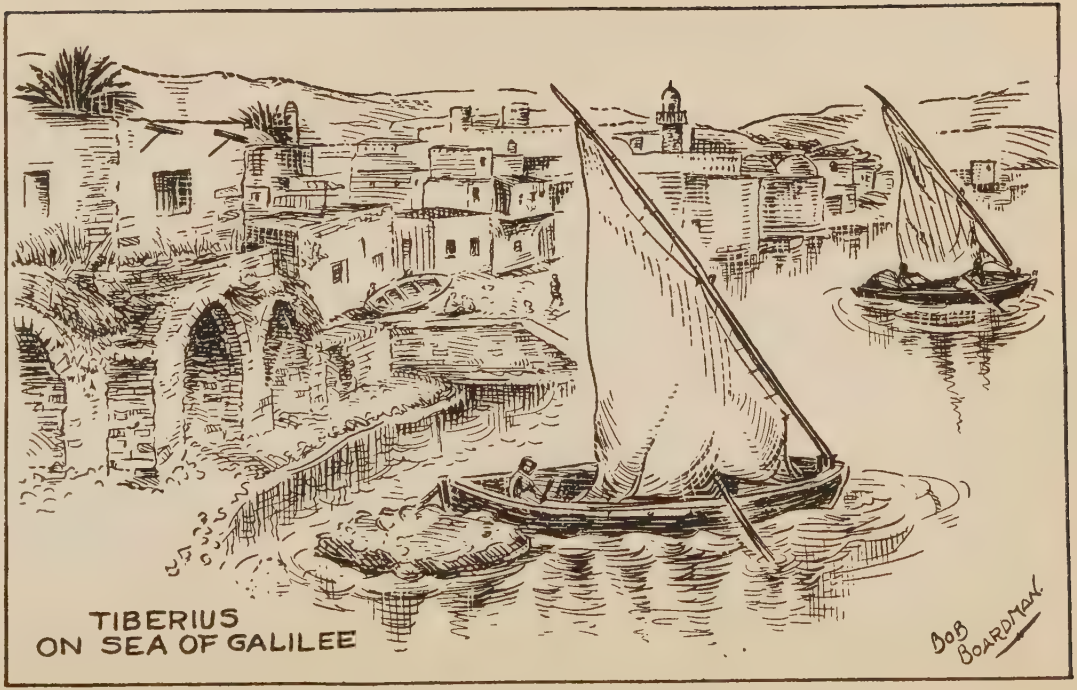
1. Discuss the work carried on by apostles in places not mentioned in Acts.
2. Write a brief story of Paul's life as told in Acts.
3. Name ten important characters mentioned in Acts besides Stephen, Peter and Paul.
4. Discuss the possible reasons for the abrupt close of Acts.
5. Follow the course of Paul's missionary journeys observing his varied experiences in the several communities.

TWENTY-FIRST INQUIRY

WHAT ARE THE RECORDS OF PAUL'S MINISTRY?

A Great Missionary.—Our study of the book of Acts has shown the missionary movement of the Gospel. Several apostles took part and among them we saw Paul of outstanding importance. This great apostle made a twofold contribution to the progress and permanency of Christianity. First, he was a preaching and teaching missionary who found people who were willing to be taught the Christian message of Jesus Christ. He organized them into societies and instructed them in what it meant to be a Christian. Many of these groups he visited more than once. In some instances, such as at Corinth and Ephesus, he spent a number of months, even years, with the people. He worked at his trade of tent making, thus maintaining himself by the labor of his own hands, and was, therefore, no burden to the people to whom he was ministering.

Paul as a Writer.—Paul's second contribution to the progress and permanency of Christianity was his writings. These letters, or epistles as they are called, were written to churches which Paul had founded and which he wished to encourage and instruct. The thirteen epistles accorded to the authorship of Paul compose a


TIBERIUS
ON SEA OF GALILEE
BOB BOARDMAN

very large and important part of the New Testament and from them we gather much of our Christian teaching in ethics and doctrine. We shall now study these epistles in the order in which they appear to have been written.

Thessalonians.—When Paul was at Corinth in 50 and 51 A. D., he wrote two letters to the Christians at Thessalonica, in Macedonia. Here on his second missionary journey, he had gathered a group of Jews and Gentiles who accepted the Gospel and who were experiencing some difficulty in relating themselves to the new teaching. Paul desired to encourage them strongly to maintain their faith and confidence in Christ as their Savior, and to engage in such social practices as should be an honor to their faith. He had heard that, because the people were looking for the second coming of Christ, they were neglecting their work and failing to go forward with the normal activity of life which indicates a wholesome mental and moral condition. As it was not convenient for him to go to Thessalonica he sent these letters of encouragement, instruction and admonition.

Galatians.—We have read in the Acts of Paul founding churches in several towns of southern Asia Minor, in the province of Galatia. While Paul was at Corinth, 51-52 A. D., or at Ephesus a few months later, he wrote a letter to the Christians in the several churches of Galatia—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. Here the Christians had been disturbed by Judaizers who claimed that in order to become a Christian, a Gentile should first accept the ceremonies required

by the Jews. They also taught that as Paul had not been one of the twelve disciples of Jesus he was not an authorized apostle. They overlooked the fact of Paul's commission direct from Jesus at the time of his conversion, a charge which Paul never doubted. His purpose in writing the letter was to assure the Christians of Galatia that the Gospel which he had preached to them was genuine, and that one of its greatest benefits was that anyone, either Jew or Gentile, might come directly under its privileges without subscribing to the Jewish laws and ceremonies. Paul had been brought up to respect the Jewish religion and his attitude in this letter is no retraction. He informed the Christians that faith in Jesus Christ brings the believer into direct relationship with God. He urged them to turn from all wrong-doing and idolatry, and to give full place in their lives to the fruits of the spirit, namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control". (5:22, 23.)

Corinthians.—While Paul was living at Ephesus about 54-55 A. D., he received word from the Christians at Corinth that they were not getting along very well. Some of these people had been idol worshipers and were accustomed to social practices which were not in accord with Christian ethics. Some entertained doubts regarding Paul's apostleship. There were also inquiries about how the church should be conducted and what a genuine Christian should believe.

Four Letters Possible.—The New Testament gives two letters to the Corinthians but if we read closely,

we discover that a letter was written before the one that is called I Corinthians in the Bible. Most scholars think that this letter has been lost. The letter that is called I Corinthians in the New Testament would be the second actual letter. Chapters 10-13 of II Corinthians seem to belong before chapters 1-9. Pehaps these chapters constituted a part of a third letter. If that should be the case, then II Corinthians 1-9 would make a fourth letter.

Purpose and Contents.—Paul felt duty bound to vindicate his apostleship. He was anxious that everything in the church should be done decently and in order and, therefore, gave directions for the business and worship of the church and for conducting the Lord's Supper. He set forth his convictions regarding the great doctrinal certainties of Christianity, indicating the different spiritual gifts with which God honors Christians. This led him to one of his most noble expressions, the familiar thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, in which he shows love to be the crowning Christian grace. In I Corinthians 15, we find the greatest New Testament argument concerning the resurrection of Christ. Paul's conceptions of Christian ethical principles are given emphatic expression in these epistles. He admonishes the Corinthian Christians to be faithful in public and in private worship, modest, peace-loving and responsive to the call of God's love. He indicates his own consciousness of relationship to them in the words, "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were

entreating by us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God." (II Cor. 5:20.)

Romans.—This letter, written from Corinth, 55 or 56 A. D., is exceptional in that Paul had not founded the church to which he wrote. He does not deal with local conditions but sets forth his conception of the plan of salvation related to both Jews and Gentiles. He calls the Gospel "the power of God unto salvation", thus indicating his belief in Christianity as a power to be received, not merely a statement of doctrine to be accepted. This is the most highly intellectual of all of his letters. He showed that neither Jew who had the law, nor the Gentile who had not the law, had any assurance of salvation without faith in Christ. Paul himself had gone through the trying experience of adjusting his thinking, as a Jew dependent upon the law, to faith in Christ as the way of salvation. He considered it his duty to offer salvation to Jews first, but because he had what all men needed, he said that he also owed a debt of instruction to Gentiles. The Gospel which he offered was for peasants as well as for kings, for rich and poor, bound and free. Paul reasoned that as Christ gave his life for others, the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. He urged upon all Christians a loyalty to the government as well as strict obedience to the Commandments, indicating that "love is the fulfilment of the law". (Rom. 13:10.)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what two ways was Paul's ministry expressed?
2. Trace on a map Paul's missionary journeys. Observe to what towns he sent letters.
3. Why did Paul write to the Christians at Thessalonica? Name five important teachings.
4. What towns of Galatia had Paul visited? What is the nature of the epistle to the Galatians?
5. How many letters did Paul write to the Corinthians?
6. Distinguish between the doctrinal and ethical teachings offered in the letters to the Corinthians.
7. What was Paul's purpose in writing to the Romans?
8. Prepare an epitome of the Christian teachings found in the letter to the Romans.
9. Choose and memorize five vital passages from these epistles.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss I Corinthians 12-15.
2. Paraphrase II Corinthians 7:1-20.
3. Summarize Paul's teachings as found in his letters.
4. Discuss the transition in thought and worship experienced by a Jew in becoming a Christian.
5. What ethical, social and religious changes were experienced by a Gentile convert?
6. Compare Paul's writings, in purpose and content, with the first five books of the New Testament.
7. Discuss society's attitude today toward the "fruits of the Spirit," Gal. 5:16-26.

TWENTY-SECOND INQUIRY

WHAT BENEFITS ACCRUED FROM PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT?

Paul a Prisoner.—When Paul left Corinth, he took with him an offering for the relief of the poor Christians at Jerusalem. Doubtless he hoped that this evidence of the good will of the Christians in Greece and Macedonia would elicit a favorable response from the Jerusalem Christians. But he was doomed to disappointment, for he was soon arrested on a false charge and but for the skill and faithfulness of the Roman governor at Jerusalem might have suffered death near the spot where years before he had witnessed the death of Stephen. Protected by a strong guard, he was taken to Caesarea and there imprisoned. We noted in our study of the Acts, the strong defenses which he made to the governors and to the king. There is evidence that those who kept him in prison hoped that a bribe would be offered for his release. Having lost hope of justice at Caesarea, he appealed to Caesar and was taken to Rome as a prisoner. We are told in Acts and in some of his own writings of his sufferings on that journey.

The Prison Epistles.—Some of the letters which we shall consider may have been written at Caesarea, but

it is probable that most of them were written at Rome. Part of the time he was a prisoner in a hired house, and could have callers. There was also the hard experience in the dark, damp, cold underground Roman prison. But whatever his physical conditions, Paul kept on telling the Gospel story and winning converts. Many of Caesar's household accepted Christ. He was not unmindful of the trials experienced by his converts elsewhere. All of the prison letters show his deep concern for the welfare of the Christians at the important cities for which the epistles were named.

Ephesians.—Very naturally, he urged the Christians at Ephesus to be faithful to the teaching which he had given them, assuring them that their faith was based on the love of God as revealed in the life and death of Christ. The third chapter records Paul's prayer in their behalf, that their faith might not fail in times of trial. He does not overlook the solemn obligations of husbands and wives, to each other, and of children to their parents. This letter was doubtless read to several congregations in the neighborhood of Ephesus. Tychicus, whom Paul calls a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, was entrusted to deliver it.

Colossians and Philemon.—The Christians at Colossae had many difficulties to meet because of the Judaizing teachers who insisted on their observance of rules concerning circumcision, feasts and the Sabbath, which Paul was convinced had no place in Christian observances. Paul told them that such observances would not bring them into right relationship with God as would faith in Christ. He urged them to put down

all selfishness, evil deeds and passions in favor of developing the fruits of the spirit such as kindness, meekness, forbearance and Christian love. He sent the letter by a trusted friend named Tychicus, who was also the bearer of a personal note to Philemon, a worthy Christian of Colossae whose runaway slave, Onesimus, had been found by Paul in Rome. The slave had been converted to Christianity and Paul had told him that he must go back to his master. Paul entreated Philemon to accept and forgive in the name of the Lord Jesus his formerly unfaithful servant.

Philippians.—This may have been the last letter written by Paul to a group and it is the one filled with the finest expressions of regard and affection of all of his writings. The people at Philippi, having heard of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, had sent friends of their number to greet him in the name of Christ and to offer comfort to him in his imprisonment. Paul deeply appreciated their kindness and responded with a letter of gratitude, praise and encouragement. His letter is an admonition to the highest and best in Christian living. He recorded his own assurance of faith and his noble purpose to "press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14), and urged that all Christians should do the same, striving to set forth in their lives the qualities of truth, justice, love, virtue and peace.

Timothy and Titus.—The two letters to Timothy and the one to Titus have commonly been considered as written by Paul to these younger Christian ministers while Paul was in prison at Rome. Paul was

convinced that the persecution of the Christians would soon count him a victim. As Paul is believed to have suffered martyrdom at Rome, 61 or 64 A. D., we must conclude that if these are truly Pauline letters, they were written between 60 and 64 A. D. They consist of advices to young ministers and admonitions to them to be faithful to the Gospel. Some writers think that they have discovered in these epistles indications of a development in the church considerably later than the years that we have indicated for the composition of these letters. This has led some scholars to assume that the letters originally written by Paul to Timothy and Titus received additions or expansion by some admirer of Paul, possibly as late as the end of the first century. The average reader, however, is content with the belief that he is reading genuine letters of Paul.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was Paul's object in taking an offering to Jerusalem?
2. What was Paul's attitude towards the Christians to whom he wrote?
3. Locate Ephesus, Colossae and Philippi.
4. What was Paul's object in writing the above letters?
5. Who were Timothy and Titus and why did Paul write to them?
6. Make a comparison of the contents of the prison epistles.

7. Is Paul's emphasis in these letters personal, ethical, social or religious?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Paul's prison experiences in Caesarea and Rome.
2. Summarize the life and ministry of Paul.
3. What was the status of Christianity at this time?
4. Tell the story of the great fire in Rome and of the persecution of the Christians under Nero.
5. What happened at Jerusalem in 70 A. D.?
6. How did these three events affect the spread of Christianity?

TWENTY-THIRD INQUIRY

WHAT GENERAL LETTERS ARE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Hebrews.—The book of Hebrews has often been considered one of the Pauline epistles. There are certain qualities of vision, argument and vigor which remind the reader of Paul, but the book is not so much a letter as an essay on the superiority of Christianity to the Old Testament religion of the Jews. Who and where he was, when and to whom he wrote, the author has not revealed. Appolos, who may have been the author, knew the Hebrew Scriptures thoroughly and realized fully that the Gospel of Christ was a distinct step in advance. The author's purpose was to warn Christian believers against surrendering their Christian faith to the old Jewish religion. Persecution as well as active proselyting on the part of the Jews might account for this danger. In the well known eleventh chapter there is an array of Old Testament heroes faithful to God and their religious convictions, to whom the author refers as a cloud of witnesses that should encourage Christians to be faithful to their vows. This treatise seems to belong to the second half of the first Christian century, possibly taking its form between 75 and 85 A. D.

The General Letters.—There are seven short letters called "Catholic", or "General" epistles. Unlike the letters of Paul, which were addressed to individuals or to certain named groups of Christians, these letters for the most part were sent out, as tracts might be distributed today, to all who would read and profit by them. These admonitions to be faithful to the Christ by living honorable lives furnish many short statements of ethical truth which remind the reader of the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. This is particularly true of the Epistle of James, which has been called the Christian book of Proverbs.

James.—The writer of this letter was a James prominent in the church at Jerusalem. In the first sentence of his letter he refers to himself as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have thought that the writer was a brother of Jesus for he was slain by Herod Agrippa, prior to 45 A. D. (Acts 12:2), in which case the letter must have been written very early. It may have been written by a different James, possibly one who was bishop in Jerusalem at a later time. A very interesting comparison is offered between the admonitions of James' letter and the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. The letter resembles a sermon and offers practical advice to Christians.

The First Letter of Peter is commonly accorded to the apostle, and may have been written at Rome a short time before his martyrdom, which must have occurred not later than 68 A. D. The author urged the Christians to be faithful to Christ in the face of

persecution and assured them that steadfastness on their part was necessary to the victory of the Gospel. The Gospel was the secret of mastery in their own lives. This message to the Christians may have gone out during the period of persecution under Nero, which would date the letter 63 to 67 A. D. Some scholars date this letter much later, in which case Peter could not have been the author.

Second Peter.—There is great uncertainty regarding the authorship of the second letter, as well as of the time and place of its composition. It bears marks of a late composition, indeed too late to have come from the pen of the noted apostle. Some writers consider that II Peter was written as late as the first half of the second Christian century. The unknown author doubtless attached the name of Peter to his letter hoping for a stronger recognition. Then too there may have been a later Christian leader named for the noted apostle but history has failed to leave a record of him. The material of II Peter bears a very close relationship to the short epistle of Jude. Possibly one treatise received two names. Which is the original cannot be determined, and it is not necessary that it should be.

Jude.—In introducing his letter of one chapter, Jude calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, and addresses his message "to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ". The occasion for his writing is given in the third verse: "I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which

was once for all delivered unto the saints." He recognized the dangers to Christianity of evildoers and of unethical conduct. Ungodliness resulted from evil practices. He urged that followers of Christ keep themselves in the love of God. This epistle furnishes at its close one of the most popular benedictions used by the church throughout the centuries: "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen."

The First Epistle of John.—Of the three epistles accredited to John, the first is the longest and most significant. These five chapters present Jesus Christ as truly representing God as Father, Light, Life and Love, and give to believers the assurance that "if we ask anything according to His will he heareth us". The author is evidently advanced in years for he refers to the ones to whom he writes as his little children, assuring them of his love for them and that they are the children of the Father's love. It is the place of Christians to love one another, to support one another in their faith, to recognize Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and to abide in him for salvation. This means a life positively set against voluntary sin and idolatry. Some of the best known sentences of the New Testament are found in this short message.

The Second and Third Epistles are of but one short chapter each, and are addressed to individuals: the

second to "The elect lady and her children", whom the apostle says he loves in truth, and the third to "Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth".

Both are expressions of personal affection and solicitation for the spiritual welfare of the persons addressed. They may have accompanied some other communication such as the fourth Gospel from the hand of the same writer. The author may have been John, the Beloved Disciple, author of the fourth Gospel, living at Ephesus about 96 to 100 A. D. Many think that is impossible and suggest that some admirer and pupil of the Beloved Disciple wrote the epistles and the fourth Gospel. Whoever put the materials into permanent form was one who knew and appreciated the life, teachings, compassion and sufferings of Jesus, and made a wholehearted record of it.

Summary.—These short messages to Christians in general offer many suggestions concerning conditions among Christians of that time. The relative importance of ethical, social and religious emphasis should be observed. To what extent the church was organized and with what authorities in charge offers opportunity for interesting inquiry. These, with the forceful treatise in Hebrews on the superiority of Christianity, add a very important section to the literature of the New Testament.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What does the author of Hebrews indicate as his purpose in writing? (6:11-12.)
2. What dangers were the Christians facing?

3. For what practical purposes were Hebrews 11, 12 and 13 written?
4. What ethical, social and religious lessons have you found in Hebrews?
5. To whom and by whom was the epistle of James written?
6. Make a list of ethical teachings found in James.
7. What is James' definition of religion?
8. Summarize the admonitions found in I Peter.
9. What are the requirements of the Christian life as found in II Peter?
10. State the purpose of the first epistle of John.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. List the great words and phrases which you find in the first epistle of John.
2. Correlate the ethical, social and religious teachings found in this section.
3. What is the meaning of anti-Christ as used in I John 2:22?
4. Discuss the relation of faith and love to conduct. I John.
5. Compare the epistles of John and his Gospel, in purpose, treatment and content.

TWENTY-FOURTH INQUIRY

WITH WHAT MESSAGE DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT CLOSE?

Revelation.—The last, and the only book of its kind in the New Testament, is an apocalypse. It is somewhat like part of Daniel in the Old Testament. Apocalyptic writings appeared in times of stress, discouragement and persecution. This New Testament apocalypse doubtless took form during the persecution of the Christians under Nero, 64 to 67 A. D., or in the time of Domitian about 96 A. D. It reflects more strongly the conditions of the later period. Christians were put to the test of faithfulness to Christ. The Roman government was cruelly against the Christians and many were put to death. Under Nero they were given over to be torn to pieces by dogs and wild animals or burned by having their clothing soaked in oil and lighted with flaming torches. Those who failed to embrace emperor worship in Domitian's reign met similar cruel treatment.

The writer, John, had visions while he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos. This small island is a rocky mountain rising out of the sea a short distance southwest of Miletus in Asia Minor. A church has been built at the summit in commemoration of what hap-

pened there. The author may have been John, the Beloved Disciple, or one known as John, the Presbyter, who lived at Ephesus.

In the first chapter, John tells of his vision and his commission to write. He declares that he is a brother and fellow in tribulation with the Christians to whom he writes. Chapters two and three are composed of letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. There is a special message of encouragement and admonition to each of them with a promise of reward to those who overcome their trials and temptations. Although conditions were very discouraging, the faithful could count on victory in the name of Christ.

Chapters four to eighteen present a series of symbols in which the number seven recurs in connection with seals, trumpets and bowls. There is also the symbolism of beasts, rivers and fire; and of colors; red represents bloodshed and suffering, black destruction and death, white purity, justice and victory. The war in heaven and on earth indicates that God is to prevail.

John declared that this was to come to pass without delay. His purpose in writing was to rally the Christians to resist the wrongs of the enemy whom they were facing that very day. They were meeting a crisis and must not fail. The fall of Roman power was predicted under the symbolic name, Babylon.

The closing section, chapters 19 to 22, ring with victory. Worship is given to God, the Word of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Satan, the power of evil, is cast down and out. Christ reigns. Even death is conquered.

A new heaven and new earth of righteousness, justice and peace; substantial, accessible and everlasting displace the old. Light overcomes darkness and life triumphs over death.

Such a message must have been of great encouragement to those who heard or read it in those dark days of terrible persecution. It has brought comfort and assurance to trusting souls down through the centuries.

We look upon the Revelation not as a prophecy of something which was to occur in a distant future. Its primary mission was for that hour of trial. There is, however, a spirit of faith and victory in the book which invigorates the trusting soul regardless of the age or country in which he lives.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why is the Revelation called an apocalypse?
2. What was the author's purpose in writing Revelation?
3. How was the Isle of Patmos related geographically to the cities to which John addressed the letters recorded in Rev. 2, 3?
4. What other letters in the New Testament are addressed to these churches?
5. Make a list of the different forms in which the "Son of Man" is presented.
6. What is John's idea of the final triumph of Jesus and of those who have been faithful to him in this life?
7. List five passages from Revelation which can be used to advantage in Christian services.

8. What ethical, social and religious lessons are found in Revelation?
9. Does the warning given in Rev. 22:18, 19 refer to the Bible or to Revelation?

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the symbolism used in Revelation.
2. Discuss the political, social and religious conditions of the time in which Revelation was written.
3. Describe the new heaven and earth as presented in Rev. 21:1-22:5.
4. Discuss the prophecies in Rev. 20:1-22:5 in connection with Matt. 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21.

TWENTY-FIFTH INQUIRY

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LITERATURE

Having completed a survey of the New Testament, we shall now undertake to summarize the events and influences of the first century of the Christian era.

Baptism of Jesus.—The century dawned in a time of peace. Roman power dominated the countries bordering on the Great Sea. The Jews, still hopeful that the Messiah of prophecy would come, accepted the terms of peace dictated by Rome and paid taxes to the great western capital. They were alert for the coming of the promised Deliverer. The message of John the Baptist was that the Deliverer was coming soon. He urged his countrymen to repent and to live true moral lives. One day a mature young man from Nazareth heard John preach and asked to be baptized. John later testified that this young man was the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world". Having determined the course of his ministry, Jesus called to his companionship, twelve learners, called disciples, who were later given the authority and responsibility of apostles.

Emphasis of Jesus' Ministry.—The significance of Jesus' ministry is emphasized by the miracles which

he wrought for the physical and mental comfort of the needy about him; by his authoritative interpretation of Scripture, reverence for the Law and understanding of prophecy; by the ethical teachings recorded in the Sermon on the Mount; by the religious instruction concerning the fatherly nature of God; by a plan of salvation for all who believe the promise of the resurrection and eternal life; by his crucifixion, resurrection, promise of the Holy Spirit, giving of the great commission to his disciple-apostles, and his ascension.

Expansion of Christianity.—Having received the Holy Spirit, the disciples went forth as apostles to invite all who would hear them to become followers of their Christ. Jerusalem became a missionary center, from which witnesses to the truth of Christ went forth in all directions. Persecution enforced the fulfilment of the command. Antioch in Syria, Ephesus, Corinth, Alexandria and Rome became influential Christian centers.

Necessity of Epistles.—The fact that Jesus' teachings did not include directions for organization nor rules for government of the Church necessitated the writing by the apostles of letters of instruction to the distant Churches. So the epistles form the earliest and a very important part of the literature of the rapidly expanding Church. A survey of this literature brings to our attention the organization of the Church, the intellectual, moral and spiritual habits of the writers and readers as well as a consciousness that these writings are of a character higher than contempo-

raneous literature and worthy of the name applied to them, "Inspired".

Contemporaneous Literature.—Christian writers were not alone in this century. Plutarch of Greece, 46-120 A. D., was producing his forty-six "Lives" of famous men and women. He also wrote on philosophy and moral subjects. Epictetus, born about the middle of the century, gave attention to such subjects as friendship, freedom and philosophy in his essays. Origen, 185-254 A. D., says of Epictetus that his writings "on morals are of more value to the world than those of Plato". Seneca at Rome, 4-65 A. D., wrote and gave utterance to such noble expressions regarding conduct, character, friendship, a happy life and a wise man, that some thought that secretly he had embraced Christianity. Pliny the Elder, 23-79 A. D., who perished in the destruction of Pompeii, while watching the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, was a distinguished Roman naturalist. An orator and author of epistles was Pliny the Younger, 62-110 A. D. In the realm of philosophy, Plutarch, 46-120 A. D., recorded his convictions as a moralist in biographies in which he contrasts Greek and Roman characters. Josephus, 37-96 A. D., a distinguished Jewish historian, recorded the resentment which his countrymen felt toward Christians. Tacitus, 55-120 A. D., wrote Roman history which, although sometimes inaccurate, throws light upon the attitude of the Roman authorities toward Christianity. Quintilian, one of many who spoke in public during this period, said, "The orator must be a good man". The Athenians, accustomed to hearing

informal as well as formal speeches, were eager to listen to Paul on Mars Hill. The record indicates that his auditors were men of leisure.

Influence of the Privileged Class.—During this century the more favored citizens of the Roman Empire had time and means for travel, conversation, meditation, study and writing. Public buildings, commodious and beautiful in design, attracted men of literary and artistic temperament. These conditions influenced the progress of Christianity with the people of education and leisure, but the Gospel made its greatest appeal to the more humble, less privileged people.

Roman Persecution.—Of the sixty-five to one hundred million subjects of the Roman world a comparatively small number were Christians, and these were called upon to endure severe persecution from unsympathetic Jews and from the government. The most severe persecutions were under Nero in the seventh, and under Domitian in the tenth decades. The cause of the latter period of persecution was the government's insistence on emperor worship. Resistance to emperor worship led to martyrdom and there are evidences that many Christians welcomed violent death believing that they would thereby gain a richer eternal reward for faithfulness and loyalty. Most writers on ethical and moral subjects as well as Christians suffered persecution and exile.

Problems.—The immoral practices in the pagan temples and the luxury of the rich added to the problems of the Christian communities. The Pauline

literature has revealed how seriously the great apostle regarded these influences.

Organization.—By the end of the century groups of Christians were organized into churches with leaders in charge. There were regular forms of worship consisting of prayer, Scripture reading, hymns, preaching and the observation of the Lord's Supper. The observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's Day gradually displaced the Jewish Sabbath. The Christian movement had been westward and by the close of the century, Rome, the capital of the empire, was also an influential center of the church.

The Christian Home.—As we review the first century of the Christian era our thought is arrested by the influence of Christianity upon the home life. Jesus was born to holy parents and reared in a humble home. His first recorded miracle was at a wedding and many of his teachings and kind deeds were in homes. His attitude toward domestic life was that of sympathy and his habitual reverence for women and consideration for children are noticeable. The disciples left their homes to follow him, but the homes were not broken up by their response to the Christian call or mission. Christian homes emphasized the sacredness of the marriage vow and offered training which resulted in virtuous manhood and womanhood. The gospel lessons were simple and practical and their normal influence in the home led to harmony, purity and enduring love. The homes of the early Christians played an important part in the development of Christianity because they were most frequently the meeting

places for Christian worship. This practice made the home all the more a divine institution, with demands of truth, fairness and faithfulness of love, all of which are qualities opposite to pagan vice, divorce, slavery and exclusiveness. The words of Jesus on divorce were plain and must have added to the stability of the home.

The Home and God.—Jesus made the home illustrative of God's relationship to mankind. In the parable of the prodigal son and the loving, forgiving father we have an illustration of the sinful world forgetting its pride in its response to the call of the Heavenly Father. This idea of forgiveness, made plain by Jesus, was cherished and recorded by the disciples as most precious. Paul affords a conspicuous example of its apostolic use in Eph. 2:19 where in addressing the Gentiles he says, "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Thus the spiritually homeless and homesick were reminded of their Father's sincere and watchful care, and came to claim their privileges among his faithful children.

The Sabbath.—Gatherings for praise and mutual helpfulness became frequent. The Christians continued to hear the law read in the synagogue but since Jesus' ascent and the Holy Spirit's descent their own gatherings were especially attractive and helpful. The Jewish Sabbath and the Lord's Day were both precious to them but the rising power and inspiration of Christian worship seems to have gradually made the Lord's Day more prominent. Quite naturally those who based their

hope of immortality in the risen Christ met with enthusiasm and worshiped with growing fervor on the day of his resurrection. Sunday, therefore, became the Christian's holy Sabbath Day. We turn to a closer study of the observation of the Lord's Day.

Christian Worship.—The close relationship of Jewish and early Christian worship was severed by the destruction of the temple, A. D. 70. Private homes from that time accommodated the Christian services. A room was set apart as the sanctuary and a table was used for the observation of the Lord's Supper. There is little evidence of Christian churches being built in the first century. The simple services consisted of prayer, testimony, the singing of psalms and hymns, and if a preacher was present there was preaching. There are evidences of the composition of hymns expressing Christian experience at a very early date.

Importance of Preaching.—While not essential to the holding of a Christian service, Christian preaching took a prominent place in making the hour of Christian worship permanent. Preaching did not originate with Christianity but the Gospel message greatly quickened a function which was characteristic of the holy services rendered by priests and prophets through many centuries. Socrates (450 B. C.) once said, "I would rather write upon the hearts of living men than upon the skins of dead sheep." He referred to preaching—an art early discovered, ever since practiced, and during the first Christian century particularly effective.

Apostles Were Preachers.—Following the example of John the Baptist and Jesus, the foremost of the apostles became preachers. Jesus had set them an example of clear, natural and authoritative preaching. His theme, the Kingdom of God, had grown consistently with his own life and his picture of the Kingdom. Everyone was surprised, all were interested, many opposed, but some surrendered to him and accepted the truth which he declared to be for them. Jesus had called his disciples after a night spent in prayer. They were chosen from every day working people and were therefore able to appeal to the people. Having lived with their divine teacher through prayer, preaching, discussion and travel, they had an equipment for their work of incomparable efficiency.

Missionary Purpose.—We are told very little about their preaching. It was missionary and ministerial with the double aim of proclaiming the glad news and of winning men to and building them up in the Christian faith. It had the function of teaching by explanation and interpretation as well as that of inspiration by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. From Acts 2 we see that Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was preceded by prayer, and that conviction, inquiry, faith, repentance, conversion and consecration attended it. Stephen, although not professing to be a preacher, brought on his martyrdom by his ringing testimony for Christ as the genuine fulfilment of Jewish prophecy of the Messiah and of the Jew's criminal rejection of him. Paul, a great Christian preacher, used his well-trained faculties to the best of his ability

to beat down sin and Satan and to fortify Christianity. His sermon on Mars Hill at Athens, Acts 17:16-34, on the "Unknown God", illustrates his breadth of knowledge, grasp of Christian meaning and fearlessness of presentation. He was original and logical in thought and tactful in application.

The Sacraments.—The early Christians observed two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The authority which they had for their observation as well as the form of ceremony which was used are both worthy of attention.

Modes of Baptism.—John's baptism was unto repentance and so was Christian baptism, but the Christians seem to have held that baptism signified the determination of the subject to accept the teachings of Jesus and to ally himself with Christ's Kingdom. Both immersion in running water and affusion were acceptable forms to the early Christians. The witness of the New Testament as well as that of the monuments of that period indicate that the former was the more common mode. There are frescoes which indicate that sprinkling also was used. Evidence points to the conclusion that the choice of mode was determined by the matter of convenience, and that more importance was attached to the fact of water baptism than to the method employed.

Infant Baptism.—The New Testament tells us nothing directly of the baptism of infants. The fact that Jesus gave attention to the children and proclaimed their acceptance with God and their privileges of grace, together with the practice of receiving families

into the household of faith, probably accounts for the early practice of infant baptism. Tertullian and Origen both refer to it, the one to condemn and the other to defend, but both pointing to its apostolic use. Acts 2:39, 16:33, I Cor. 7:14 all support this view. There is shown in the Coptic church at Cairo, Egypt, a baptismal font, cut from the rock wall of the room said to have been occupied by the holy family, in which all infants of Coptic families have been baptized by immersion. The claim is made for this church that it was used in the first century and that it is the oldest church in Africa.

The Church, as then existing, stood not as a life-saving station nor claiming any virtue in itself, but for the uniting of all who were saved. The baptism of infants may or may not have been practiced in the first century. If at all, probably not generally, but the teachings of that period certainly laid the foundation for the later rite. While the majority of scholars support this view the contention of others for the prevalence of infant baptism in the first century is not without good support.

The Lord's Supper.—Our knowledge of the form in which the Lord's Supper was first observed is very uncertain. The evidence is confusing. Church history deals with the terms Passover, Paschal Supper, the Last Supper, the Love Feast, the Eucharist and the Lord's Supper, all in loose terms. The New Testament references are not sufficiently explanatory to form a basis for a clear and positive statement. This much can be said, however, with reasonable certainty, that

Jesus intended that at their evening meal—which was the principal meal of the day—they should remember him. The four passages of the New Testament which treat of the Lord's Supper are Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-20, I Cor. 11:23-25. Modern scholars support the conclusions of earlier critics that it is very doubtful that Christ refers to the Lord's Supper in John 6. The teaching of the passage seems to be that in contrasting earthly and heavenly bread or sustenance Jesus teaches that those who believe him do receive him as their life. Through personal communion his spirit quickens their lives. So to eat his flesh and drink his blood means to commune with him.

Early Observance of the Lord's Supper.—The three parallel accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper as given by Matthew, Mark and Luke indicate that at first it was a part of a meal at which the elements of bread and wine were consecrated by the Jewish grace—perhaps now tempered with Christian meaning—which had a peculiar religious significance relative to Christ's being the Savior and commemorating his covenant of redemption. Jesus was no longer to be bodily present with them at their social meal but would be with them in their remembrance. Paul declares in I Cor. 11:23 that he received his account from the Lord and adds weight to the evidence that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. I Cor. 11:20-34 is the fullest description in the New Testament of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. From it we learn that the Christians at Corinth had allowed

abuses to creep in, so that there were quarrels about the amounts of food and drink received by those partaking. As a remedy for this difficulty the Supper was reduced to simplicity. It no longer should be a full social meal. There was to be less feasting and more emphasis upon the spiritual meaning of the observance. Between these two extremes of the first idea of the Lord's Supper and Paul's correction of abuses we find the observance in the form of a social meal held probably once a week by all Christians. Its object was brotherhood, a fellowship of purity, a means of strengthening faith, an opportunity for the rich to bring of their abundance for the relief of the poor, and in remembrance of Christ.

The Ritual.—The New Testament is silent about any liturgical service over the elements used in celebration of the Lord's Supper. In keeping with Jewish as well as Christian training, there was a prayer of blessing before the food and drink were touched. Christ made the food in front of them holy in remembrance of him, but we cannot read into the New Testament language, nor find in the custom of the first century, anything which would make the Lord's Supper a continuous sacrifice.

The Christian Life.—The distinguishing features of the Christian life of this period are noticeable in faith and practice. The object of early Christianizing efforts was to spread the Gospel. The slogan of this period was "conform to the Gospel". Pastoral care for the churches was given by its chief teachers, and the churches profited by the explanations of doctrine

and the exhortations to steadfastness which were given. The ethical standards which were set up for Christians are indicated by Philippians 4:8, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Christians must have felt that they had allied themselves with a progressive movement which was to stop nothing short of heaven. A uniting force was at work bringing people of every color, locality, language and religion into the path of this multiplying, developing, organizing host. The creed, and to some extent the practice, of this period was in the words of Peter, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the King." (I Peter 2:17.)

Summary.—The Christian life in the early Church as we have considered it has revealed groups of individuals who have accepted Christ as their Savior, and his teachings as their standard of living. Holiness, fraternal love and missionary spirit are noticeable in their lives. Their worship helped them in maintaining the growth of these qualities. Their services were simple and private rather than public and formal. The affairs of the Church were cared for by leaders who were sometimes called presbyters and elders. The chief overseer of a Church or group of Churches was called bishop. We hear the term deacon; and Phoebe was a deaconess, but how these officers were chosen and just how absolute was their authority are sub-

jects of later discussion instead of revelations of this period.

The Ideal Life of Jesus moved his followers to charity, purity, truth and righteousness. With the advance of the Gospel, Christians became convinced that God was the Father of all men and that Christianity was the religion for all the world. Their acceptance of Christ satisfied their religious nature, and the Christian qualities of faith, hope and love steadied them in their trials, held them true in persecution, and made even their tragic deaths peaceful and convincing proofs of the reality and power of the Gospel of Christ.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What were the religious results of the life and ministry of Jesus?
2. How far and among what peoples had the Gospel been preached?
3. To what extent had it been accepted?
4. What social effects followed the acceptance of the Gospel?
5. What other religious interests were there during this century?
6. What influence did the Gospel have on paganism, superstition, moralists?
7. Compare the privileges and practices of baptism during the apostolic period with the use of this sacrament today.
8. Make a similar study of the Lord's Supper.
9. Summarize in your own words the early Christian literature.
10. Organize all that you know about the Christian life of the first century.

TWENTY-SIXTH INQUIRY

WHAT PLACE HAS THE BIBLE IN MODERN LIFE?

Old but Vital.—Our attention has been given to the rise, record, transmission and interpretation of a most remarkable treasury of religious literature. Eighteen hundred years after the last message was given and at least thirty centuries after the first chapter was written, the Bible holds an unique place. During this time, men of many races and languages have experienced the struggle for human existence, personal and political liberty, religious enlightenment and social permanence. The Bible has had no small influence in inspiring and shaping these great human interests and accomplishments. It has offered illumination, guidance and inspiration for all of these relationships.

Authority of the Bible.—The Bible is accepted as an authority in matters of religion by a large part of the world's civilized population. It reveals the nature and will of God and shows men how to come into a right relationship with God. The Bible is esteemed as a book of life for all who will heed its admonitions. Kings and common people have been influenced by it as by no other book or message. It began with the revelation of a tribal God and closed with the revelation of the love of God reaching out unto all mankind. These great teachings applied to all nations during

the past nineteen centuries have helped to standardize the ideals of government and the dealings of nations with one another.

Many conditions which are now considered evil have been justified in former times by a certain interpretation of the Bible. Slavery, witchcraft and limited monarchy in government are well known instances. As we observe the Bible today, printed in eight hundred languages and dialects, and distributed to all parts of the world, we ask attention to the place of the Bible in modern life. We shall also reflect upon the message of the Bible to modern life and inquire regarding what help the Bible has to offer for the solution of our social problems.

The Outstanding Book.—From private devotions to the inauguration of the highest officials of nations the Bible holds an unquestioned place of reverence and authority. Biblical passages of devotional thought or of wisdom's urge are treasured by millions of people around the world. Individual salvation through faith in Christ as Son of God and Savior for all who accept him challenges the attention and devotion of leading minds in this as in preceding centuries.

The Bible is still the outstanding book of all literature. There are other sacred books, but the Bible heads the list in influence on modern life.

The Bible's Message to Modern Life.—Modern life needs the same ethical, social and religious message which the Bible has given to every generation. Today, as formerly, the Bible presents an ideal for life. It tells what is good, better and best. It challenges honest

thought and investigation. Good conduct is the product of wholesome thought. "As he thinketh, so is he." It does matter what one thinks.

Intelligent thinking through the Bible leads to such conclusions as recorded in Micah 6:8, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The New Testament records Jesus' words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6.) "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21) is still the urge of the Bible. "I press on toward the mark unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" are the words of Paul. Is the urge of these words less vital for our day?

The Bible and Modern Social Problems.—The human experience of living together constitutes social problems which may be represented under four heads:

The unit of society—the family;

The support of society—production and distribution;

The security of society—Christian education;

The outreach of society—international and interracial relationships.

The Bible offers principles for the settlement of these difficulties. He who keeps these interests in mind as he again and again thinks through the Bible will find that this Revelation of the mind of God meets modern needs with an incomparable fulness. Have you not found that inquiry leads one into fruitful fields of truth? The Bible is not the only field of truth, but to the thoughtful Christian it is the richest.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REVIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Define "Intertestamental period".
2. Name and summarize the approaches to a study of the New Testament.
3. Of what period of time is the N. T. a partial record?
4. Name the kinds of literature found in the N. T.
5. Between what dates were the books of the N. T. probably written?
6. What was the original language of the N. T.?
7. What government dominated the N. T. world? What language was used?
8. How many books are there in the N. T.? Name them in order.
9. Name the authors of the N. T. and tell something about each one.
10. Tell how we got our Bible.
11. State four reasons for studying the Bible.
12. Compare on a map the O. T. and N. T. world.
13. Name several rulers of N. T. times.
14. Where and when was Jesus born? Where did he grow up?
15. What are the first four books of the N. T. called as a group?
16. Which are the synoptic Gospels? Why so called?
17. What differences are observed in the purpose, subject matter, manner of treatment and devotional effect of the Gospels?
18. Name and describe the religious and political parties of Jesus' time.
19. Tell all that you can about John the Baptist.
20. Why was Jesus baptized? Where? When? By whom? Where recorded?

21. Tell the story of Jesus' temptation.
22. What was the significance of Jesus' temptation?
23. What was the subject of Jesus' teaching?
24. Where is the sermon on the mount recorded? Where was the mount?
25. Define parable and name five important ones.
26. Define miracle and name five important ones.
27. What did Jesus teach about God? Sin? Righteousness? Salvation?
28. What examples and teachings did Jesus give about prayer?
29. In what parts of Palestine and among what people was Jesus' ministry most successful?
30. Name the twelve disciples. Where were they from?
31. Locate and describe the Transfiguration.
32. Indicate on a map the extent of Jesus' travels.
33. Name in their order the most important events of Passion week.
34. Tell the story of the arrest, trial and crucifixion.
35. Why was Jesus condemned to be crucified?
36. At what place and near what city was Jesus crucified?
37. Of what Christian importance are the crucifixion and resurrection?
38. Summarize what Jesus taught.
39. Name and locate ten important places mentioned in the Gospels.
40. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do after his resurrection?
41. What important teachings followed the resurrection?
42. Name the author and state the purpose of Acts.
43. With what important events does the book open?
44. Name five important characters of the first nine chapters.
45. Whose conversion is recorded in Acts? Give the circumstances.
46. Who was the first Christian martyr? What was the effect on the other believers?

47. Summarize the progress of the Gospel up to the ministry of Paul.
48. Outline the life and ministry of Paul.
49. Indicate on a map the activities recorded in Acts.
50. Why did the Christians so often encounter opposition?
51. Who were the Judaizers and what was their contention?
52. Name in the order of their production the Pauline epistles.
53. State the purpose of Paul's epistles.
54. List five important passages from Paul's epistles.
55. Name five subjects or points of emphasis which are common to Paul's preaching and writing.
56. State the nature, purpose and possible author of Hebrews.
57. Summarize the best known chapter of Hebrews.
58. Compare the epistle of James with the sermon on the mount.
59. Summarize I John. Compare it with the fourth Gospel.
60. Discuss the nature, style, object and religious value of Revelation.
61. With what description does the book close?
62. List ten passages of the N. T. well adapted to devotional reading.
63. Tell the story of the development of the N. T.
64. Name thoughtfully five values which you have gained from this study.
65. What religious and social progress can be traced through the Bible?

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Authorities differ widely regarding dates assigned to certain events of Old Testament history. No attempt is made in this table to arrange dates earlier than Abraham. A very exhaustive discussion may be found in the article "Chronology", Hastings Dictionary of the Bible. The figures preceding names of persons are approximate for activities and do not denote age.

2350-2000—Abraham in Canaan.
1700-1600—Joseph in Egypt.
1250-1200—Moses leader of Exodus.
1200-1150—Joshua captain of conquest of Canaan.
1150-1040—Othniel, Ehud, Gideon and other judges.
1050-970—Samuel judge and prophet.
1040-1020—Saul the first king of Israel.
1020-980—David united the kingdom. Capital changed from Hebron to Jerusalem.
980-937—Solomon last king of United Kingdom.
937-586—The two kingdoms: Judah and Israel.

Kings of Judah	Prophets	Kings of Israel
920-917—Abijah		Nadab—915-913
		Baasha—913-889
917-876—Asa		Elah-Zimri—889-887
		Omri—887-875
876-851—Jehoshaphat	Elijah	Ahab—875-853
	Elijah	Ahaziah—853-851
851-843—Jehoram	Elijah	Jehoram—851-842
843-842—Ahaziah	Elisha	Jehu—842-714
842-836—Athaliah		
836-796—Joash		Jehoahaz—814-797
		Jehoash—797-781

782-751—Azariah — Amos, Hosea — Jeroboam II—781-740
751-735—Jotham
Isaiah — Shallum—739-738
Micah — Menahem—738-736
Pekahiah-Pekah—736-735
735-715—Ahaz
Hoshea—734-721
Captivity of Israel—721
715-686—Hezekiah
686-641—Manasseh
641-639—Ammon — Zephaniah
639-608—Josiah's reforms — Nahum
Jeremiah
Habakkuk
608-597—Jehoiakim — Ezekiel
597—Jehoiakin. First capture of Jerusalem by Babylonians.
597-586—Zedekiah.
586—Destruction of Jerusalem.
586-516—Babylonian Exile.
Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah. Isaiah 40-66.
550-540—Literary work on Kings, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Deuteronomy, Leviticus.
500-400—Malachi, Obadiah, Nehemiah, Ezra, Ruth.
400-200—Joel, Job, Jonah, Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Esther, Psalms.
176-63—The Maccabaean period.
167—Successful revolt of Judas Maccabaeus.
165—Book of Daniel. Canon of Scripture completed.
63—Roman rule under Pompey.

NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

6 B. C.—The birth of Christ.

A. D.

29—Crucifixion of Jesus.

35—Conversion of Saul, Acts 9.

35-38—Paul's sojourn in Damascus and Arabia.

38-47—Paul in Syria and Cilicia.

47-48—Paul's first missionary journey, Acts 13, 14.

48—Council at Jerusalem, Acts 15, Gal. 2:1-10.

49-52—Second missionary journey, Acts 15:36-18:22.

50—Paul's letters to the Thessalonians.

51—Paul's letter to the Galatians.

52-56—Paul's third missionary journey, Acts 18:23-21:15.

52-55—Paul's three years at Ephesus.

54-55—Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

56—Paul's letter to the Romans.

56—Paul's journey to Jerusalem.

56-58—Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea.

59—Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner.

59-61—Paul, a prisoner, writes to Philemon, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians.

54-68—Nero emperor.

64—Persecution of Christians.

Letters to Timothy and Titus (?)

62-67—Epistles of James, Jude and Peter (?)

66—Jews revolt against Roman rule in Palestine.

70—Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

67-85—The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke.

80-85—The book of Acts.

80-90—The epistle to the Hebrews.

95-96—The book of Revelation.

95-96—The persecution under Domitian.

96-100—The Gospel and letters of John.

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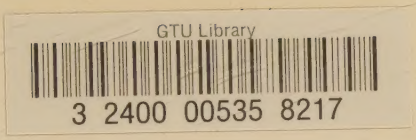

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